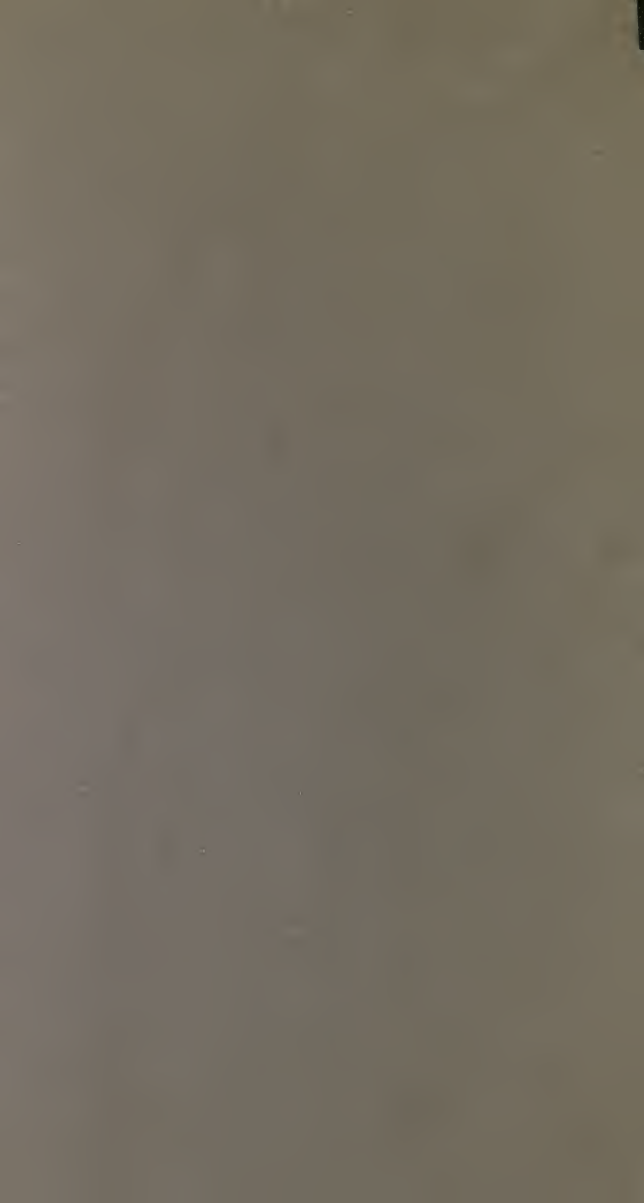




Gibber, Colley
The refusal

PR
3347
A73



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Robert del.

Published for Bells Druggs Theatre on April 5th 1777.

The Author's Design.

*MR. MACKLIN, in the Character of S. GILBERT WRANGLE.
 Nay, I have them from all Nations, here's one now,
 from an Irish Relation of my own.*

BELL'S EDITION.

THE
REFUSAL;

OR, THE
LADIES PHILOSOPHY.

A COMEDY,

As written by COLLEY CIBBER.

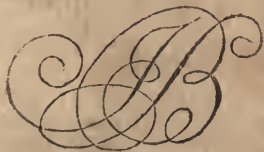
DISTINGUISHING ALSO THE
VARIATIONS OF THE THEATRE,

AS PERFORMED AT THE
Theatre-Royal in Covent-Garden.

Regulated from the Prompt-Book,

By PERMISSION of the MANAGERS,

By Mr. WILD, Prompter.



LONDON:

Printed for JOHN BELL, near Exeter-Exchange, in the Strand.

MDCCLXXVII.

PR
3347
A73



P R O L O G U E.

Spoken by the Author.

*G*allants! behold before your eyes the wight,
 Whose actions stand accountable to-night,
 For all your dividends of profit or delight.
 New plays resemble bubbles, we must own,
 But their intrinsic value soon is known,
 There's no imposing pleasure on a town.
 And when they fail, count o'er his pains and trouble,
 His doubts, his fears, the poet is a bubble.
 As heroes by the tragic muse are sung;
 So to the comic, knaves and fools belong:
 Follies, to-night, of various kinds we paint,
 One, in a female philosophic saint,
 That wou'd by learning nature's laws repeal,
 Warm all her sex's bosoms to rebel,
 And only with Platonic raptures swell.
 Long she resists the proper use of beauty,
 But flesh and blood reduce the dame to duty.
 A coxcomb too of modern stamp we show,
 A wit—but impudent—a South-Sea beau.
 Nay, more—our muses fire (but, pray, protect her)
 Roasts, to your taste, a whole South-Sea director.
 But let none think we bring him here in spite,
 For all their actions, sure, will bear the light;
 Besides, he's painted here in height of power,
 Long ere we laid such ruin at his door:
 When he was levee'd, like a statesman, by the town,
 And thought his heap'd-up millions all his own.
 No, no; stock's always at a thousand here,
 He'll almost honest on the stage appear.
 Such is our fare, to feed the mind our aim,
 But poets stand, like warriors, in their fame;
 One ill day's work brings all their past to shame.
 Thus having tasted of your former favour,
 The chance seems now for deeper stakes than ever.
 As after runs of luck, we're most accurst,
 To lose our winnings, than have lost at first;
 A first stake lost has often sav'd from ruin,
 But on one cast to lose the tout—is hard undoing.
 But be it as it may—the dye is thrown,
 Fear now were folly—Pass the Rubicon.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

M E N.

Covent-Garden.

<i>Sir Gilbert Wrangle,</i>	—	—	Mr. Macklin.
<i>Frankly,</i>	—	—	Mr. Lewis.
<i>Granger,</i>	—	—	Mr. Mahon.
<i>Wittling,</i>	—	—	Mr. Lee Lewes.
<i>Cook,</i>	—	—	Mr. Dunstall.

W O M E N.

<i>Lady Wrangle,</i>	—	—	Mrs. Green.
<i>Sophronia,</i>	—	—	Mrs. Lessingham.
<i>Maid,</i>	—	—	Miss Ambrose.
<i>Charlotte,</i>	—	—	Miss Macklin.

Servants, &c.

THE

T H E
R E F U S A L.

* * *The lines distinguished by inverted comas, 'thus,' are omitted in the Representation, and those printed in Italics are the additions of the Theatre.*

A C T I.

The SCENE, Westminster-Hall.

Frankly and Granger meeting.

FRANKLY.

IS it possible!

Gran. Frankly!

Fran. Dear Granger! I did not expect you these ten days: how came you to be so much better than your word?

Gran. Why, to tell you the truth, because I began to think London better than Paris.

Fran. That's strange: but you never think like other people.

Gran. I am more apt to speak what I think, than other people: though, I confess, Paris has its charms; but to me they are like those of a coquette, gay and gaudy; they serve to amuse with, but a man would not choose to be married to them. In short, I am to pass my days in Old England, and am therefore resolved not to have an ill opinion of it.

Fran. These settled thoughts, Ned, make me hope, that if ever you should marry, you will be as partial to the woman you intend to pass your days with.

Gran. Faith, I think every man's a fool that is not: but it's very odd; you see, the grossest fools have ge-

‘ nerally sense enough to be fond of a fine house, or a fine horse, when they have bought them : they can see the value of them, at least ; and why a poor wife should not have as fair play for one’s inclination, I can see no reason, but downright ill nature or stupidity.

‘ *Fran.* What do you think of avarice ? when people purchase wives, as they do other goods, only because they are a pennyworth : then too, a woman has a fine time on’t.

‘ *Gran.* Ay, but that will never be the case of my wife : when I marry, I’ll do it with the same convenient views as a man would set up his coach ; because his estate will bear it, it’s easy, and keeps him out of dirty company.

‘ *Fran.* But, what ! would you have a wife have no more charms than a chariot ?

‘ *Gran.* Ah, friend, if I can but pass as many easy hours at home with one, as abroad in t’other, I will take my chance for her works of supererogation ; and I believe at worst, should be upon a par with the happiness of most husbands about town.

‘ *Fran.* But at this rate, you would marry before you are in love.

‘ *Gran.* Why not ? Do you think happiness is entailed upon marrying the woman you love ? No more than reward is upon public merit : it may give you a title to it indeed ; but you must depend upon other people’s virtue to find your account in either. For my part, I am not for building castles in the air ;’ when I marry, I expect no great matters ; none of your angels, a mortal woman will do my business, as you’ll find, when I tell you my choice. ‘ All I desire of a wife, is, that she will do as she is bid, and keep herself clean.’

Fran. ‘ Would you not have her a companion, tho’, as well as a bedfellow ?

‘ *Gran.* You mean, I suppose, a woman of sense.

‘ *Fran.* I should not think it amiss for a man of sense.

‘ *Gran.* Nor I ; but, ’s’death ! where shall I get her ? In short, I am tired with the search, and will ev’n take up, with one, as nature has made her, handsome, and only a fool of her own making.

Fran. Was ever so desperate an indifference? I am impatient till I know her.

Gran. Even the sage and haughty prude, Sophronia.

Fran. Sophronia! 'I hope you don't take her for a fool, Sir:' why, she thinks she has more sense than all her sex together.

Gran. 'You don't tell me that as a proof of her wit, I presume, Sir.

Fran. No: but I think your humour's a little extraordinary, that can resolve to marry the woman you laugh at.

Gran. It's at least, a sign I am in no great danger of her laughing at me, Tom; the case of many a prettier fellow. But I take Sophronia to be only a fool of parts, that is however capable of thinking right; and a man must be nice indeed, that turns up his nose at a woman who has no worse imperfection, than setting too great value upon her understanding.' I grant it she is half mad with her learning and philosophy: what then? so are most of our great men, when they get a little too much on't. Nay, she is so rapt in the pride of her imaginary knowledge, that she almost forgets she is a woman, and thinks all offers of love to her person a dishonour to the dignity of her soul; but all this does not discourage me: she may fancy herself as wise as she pleases; but unless I fail in my measures, I think I shall have hard luck, if I don't make that fine flesh and blood of hers, as troublesome as my own in a fortnight.

Fran. You must have better luck than I had then; I was her fool for above five months together, and did not come ill-recommended to the family; but could make no more impression than upon a vestal virgin; and yet how a man of your cool reflexion, can think of attempting her, I have no notion.

Gran. Psha! I laugh at all her airs: a woman of a general insensibility, is only one that has never been rightly attacked.

Fran. Are you then really resolved to pursue her?

Gran. Why not? Is not she a fine creature? Has not she parts? Would not half her knowledge, equally divided, make fifty coquettes all women of sense? Is
not

‘ not her beauty natural, her person lovely, her mien majestic? — Then such a constitution —

‘ *Fran.* Nay, she has a wholesome look, I grant you : but then her prudery, and Platonic principles, are insupportable.

‘ *Gran.* Now to me they are more diverting, than all the levity of a coquette : Oh, the noble conflicts between nature and a proud understanding, make our triumphs so infinitely above those petty conquests — Besides, are not you philosopher enough to know, my friend, that a body continent holds most of the thing contained ? ’Tis not your wasting current, but reservoirs, that make the fountain play ; not the prodigal’s, but the miser’s chest that holds the treasure. No, no, take my word, your prude has thrice the latent fire of a coquette. Your prude’s flask hermetically sealed, all’s right within, depend upon’t ; but your coquette’s a mere bottle of plague-water, that’s open to every body.

‘ *Fran.* Well, Sir, since you seem so heartily in earnest, and, I see, are not to be disgusted at a little female frailty : I think I ought in honour to let you into a little more of her. You must know then, this marble-hearted lady, who could not bear my addresses to herself, has, notwithstanding, flesh and blood enough to be confoundedly uneasy, that I now pay them to her sister.

Gran. I am glad to hear it. Pr’ythee, let me know all ; for ’tis upon these sort of weaknesses that I am to strengthen my hopes.

‘ *Fran.* You know, I writ you word, that I thought the safest way to convey my real passion for her sister Charlotte, would be to drop my cold pretensions to Sophronia insensibly ; upon which account I rather heightened my respect to her : but as, you know, ’tis harder to disguise a real inclination, than to dissemble one we have not ; Sophronia, it seems, has so far suspected the cheat, that, since your absence, she has broke into a thousand little impatiences at my new happiness with Charlotte.

‘ *Gran.* Good.’

Fran. But the jest is, she can’t yet bring down her vanity to believe I am in earnest with Charlotte neither ;
but

THE REFUSAL.

9

but really fancies my addressee there are all grimace ; the mere malice of a rejected lover, to give her scorn a jealousy.

Gran. Admirable ! ‘ but I hope you are sure of this.

‘ *Fran.* ’Twas but yesterday she gave me a proof of it.

‘ *Gran.* Pray, let’s hear.

‘ *Fran.* Why, as Charlotte and I were whispering at one end of a room, while we thought her wrapt up in one of Horace’s odes at the other, of a sudden I observed her come sailing up to me, with an insulting smile, as who should say—I laugh at all these shallow arts—— then turned short, and looking over her shoulder, cried aloud,——*Ab, miser !*

‘ *Quantâ laboras in Charybdi !*

‘ *Gran.* *Digne puer meliore flammâ*——Ah! methinks I see the imperious hussy in profile, waving her snowy neck into a thousand lovely attitudes of scorn and triumph! Oh, the dear vanity!’ Well, when all’s said, the coxcomb’s vastly handsome.

‘ *Fran.* ’Egad, thou art the oddest fellow in the world, to be thus capable of diverting yourself with your mistress’s jealousy of another man.

‘ *Gran.* Psha! Thou’rt too refined a lover; I am glad of any occasion that proves her more a woman than she imagines.

‘ *Fran.* But pray, Sir, upon what foot did you stand with her before you went to France?

‘ *Gran.* Oh, I never pretended to more than a Platonic passion; I saw, at first view, she was inaccessible by love.

‘ *Fran.* Yet, since you were resolved to pursue her, how came you to think of rambling to Paris?

‘ *Gran.* Why, the last time I saw her, she grew so fantastically jealous of my regarding her more as a woman, than an intellectual being, that my patience was half tired; and having, at that time, an appointment with some idle company to make a trip to Paris, I slyly took that occasion, and told her, if I threw myself into a voluntary banishment from her person, I hoped she would then be convinced, I had no other views of happiness, than what her letters might, even in absence, as well gratify, from the charms of her understanding.

‘ *Fran.*

Fran. Most solemnly impudent.

Gran. In short, her vanity was so blind to the banter; that she insisted upon my going, and made me a conditional promise of answering all my letters; in which I have flattered her romantic folly to that degree, that in her last, she confesses an entire satisfaction in the Innocent Dignity of my inclinations (as she styles it) and therefore thinks herself bound in gratitude to recall me from exile: which gracious boon (being heartily tired at Paris) I am now arrived to accept of.

Fran. The merriest amour that ever was! Well, and, *Frank*, why don't you visit her?

Gran. Oh! I do all things by rule—not till she has dined; for our great English philosopher, my Lord Bacon, tells you, that then the mind is generally most ductile.

Fran. Wisely considered.

Gran. Besides, I want to have a little talk first with the old gentleman her father.

Fran. Sir Gilbert! If I don't mistake, yonder he comes.

Gran. Where, pr'ythee?

Fran. There, by the bookseller's; don't you see him, with an odd crowd after him?

Gran. Oh! now I have him—he's loaded with papers, like a solicitor.

Fran. Sir, he is, at this time, a man of the first consequence, and receives more petitions every hour, than the court of chancery in a whole term.

Gran. What! is he lord treasurer?

Fran. A much more considerable person, I can assure you; he is a South Sea director, Sir.

Gran. Oh, I cry you mercy! and those about him, I presume, are bowing for subscriptions.

Fran. That's their business, you may be sure; but see, at last he has broke from them. *Let's*

Gran. No: there's one has got him by the sleeve again.

Fran. What if we should stand off, and observe a little?

Gran. With all my heart.

Sir Gibb. [To a Man at the door.] Pr'ythee, be quiet, fellow! I tell you I'll send the Duke an answer to-morrow morning.

[Within.]

[*Within.*] It's very well, Sir——

Sir Gilbert speaks, entering with a great parcel of open letters in his hand, and others stuffing his pockets.

Sir Gilb. Very well ! aye, so it is, if he gets it then—Why ! what ! these people of quality, sure, think they do you a favour when they ask one—Huh, let him come for it himself ! I am sure I was forced to do so at his house, when I came for my own, and could not get it neither—and he expects I should give him two thousand pounds only for sending a footman to me. Why ! what ! Does his Grace think I don't know which side my bread's buttered on ? Let's see ! ' who are these from ? [*Reads to himself.*

' *Gran.* The old gentleman's no blind admirer of a man of quality, I see.

' *Fran.* Oh, Sir ! he has lately taken up a mortal aversion to any man that has a better title than himself.

' *Gran.* How so pray ?

' *Fran.* As he grows rich, he grows proud ; and among friends, had lately a mind to be made a lord himself ; but applying to the wrong person, it seems he was disappointed ; and ever since piques himself upon despising any nobleman who is not as rich as himself.

' *Gran.* Hah ! the right plebeian spirit of Old England : but I think he's counted an honest man.

' *Fran.* Umph ! Yes, well enough—a good sort of a mercantile conscience : he is punctual in bargains, and expects the same from others ; he will neither steal nor cheat, unless he thinks he has the protection of the law : then indeed, as most thriving men do, he thinks honour and equity are chimerical notions.

' *Gran.* That is, he bluntly professes what other people practise with more breeding—But let's accost him.

' *Fran.* Stay a little.

' *Enter a Footman, with a Letter.*

' *Sir Gilb.* To me, friend !——What, will they never have done ?

' *Footm.* Sir, my Lady Double-chin presents her service, and says she'll call for your honour's answer to-morrow morning.

Sir

‘ *Sir Gilb.* Very well ; tell my Lady, I’ll take care—
 ‘ [*Exit Footman.*] to be exactly out of the way when she
 ‘ comes.

‘ *Gran.* Hah ! he’ll keep that part of his word, I warrant him.

‘ *Sir Gilb.* Let’s see : the old story, I suppose—[*Reads.*]
 ‘ Um—um—yes, yes—only two thousand—Hah ! does
 ‘ the woman take me for a fool ? Does she think I don’t
 ‘ know, that a two thousand subscription is worth two
 ‘ thousand guineas ? And because she is not worth above
 ‘ fourscore thousand already, she would have me give
 ‘ them to her for nothing. To a poor relation, she pretends,
 ‘ indeed ; as if she loved any body better than herself.
 ‘ A drum ! and a fiddle ! I’ll grease none of
 ‘ your fat sows, not I.’—No, no ; get you into the negative
 ‘ pocket—Bless my eyes ! Mr. Granger !

Gran. Sir Gilbert, I am your most humble servant.

Sir Gilb. In troth, I am glad to see you in England again—Mr. Frankly, your humble servant.

Fran. Sir, your most obedient.

Sir Gilb. Well, how goes Mississippi, man ? What, do they bring their money by waggon loads to market still ? Hay ! ha, ha, ha !

Gran. Oh, all gone ! Good for nothing, Sir ! Your South Sea has brought it to waste paper.

Sir Gilb. Why, ay, han’t we done glorious things here, ha ? We have found work for the coachmakers as well as they, boy.

Gran. Ah, Sir, in a little time we shall reduce those, who kept them there, to their original of riding behind them here.

Sir Gilb. Huh, huh ! you will have your joke still, I see—Well, you have not sold out, I hope.

Gran. Not I, faith, Sir ; the old five thousand lies snug as it was. I don’t see where one can move it and mend it ; so e’en let it lie, and breed by itself.

Sir Gilb. You’re right, you’re right—hark you—keep it—the thing will do more still, boy.

Gran. Sir, I am sure it’s in hands that can make it do any thing.

Sir Gilb. Have you got any new subscriptions ?

Gran. You know, Sir, I have been absent ; and it is really

really now grown so valuable a favour, I have not the confidence to ask it.

Sir Gibb. Psha! pr'ythee, never talk of that, man.

Gran. If I thought you were not full, Sir——

Sir Gibb. Why, if I were as full as a bumper, Sir, I'll put my friends in, let who will run over for it.

Fran. Sir Gilbert always doubles his favours by his manner of doing them.

Sir Gibb. Frankly, you are down for five thousand pounds already, and you may depend upon every shilling of it—Let me see—what have I done with my list?——Granger has a good estate, and had an eye upon my eldest daughter before he went to France. I must have him in; it may chance to bring the matter to bear. [*Aside.*]

Gran. Where did you get all these letters, Sir Gilbert?

Sir Gibb. Why, ay, this is the trade every morning; all for subscriptions. Nay, they are special stuff—Here, pr'ythee, read that.

Fran. Who is it from, Sir?

Sir Gibb. Oh, a North-Briton! a bloody, squabbling fellow, who owes me a thousand pounds for difference, and that's his way of paying me. Read it.

Gran. [*Reading.*] “Wuns, Sir, de ye no tack me for a man of honour! Ye need no send to my ludging so often for year pimping thousand pound. An ye'll be but civil a bit, Ise order the bearer, my brocker, to mack up year balance; an if ye wull but gee yoursel the trouble to put his name intull your own list for a thousand subscription, he'se pay ye aw down upo' the nail: but an ye wunna do this smaw jubb, the deel dom me an ye c'er see a groat from me, as long as my name is

George Blunderbusf.”

Fran. What can you do with such a fellow, Sir?

Sir Gibb. Do with him! why, I'll let him have it, and get my money. I had better do that, than be obliged to fight for it, or give it to the lawyers.

Fran. Nay, that's true too.

Sir Gibb. Here's another, now, from one of my wife's hopeful relations; an extravagant puppy, that has rattled a gilt chariot to pieces before it was paid for. But he'll die in jail.

Fran. [*Reading.*]—"Dear knight."—I see he is familiar.

Sir Gilb. Nay, it's all of a piece.

Fran. [*Reading.*] "Not to mince the matter; yesterday, at Marybone, they had me all bob as a Robin. In short, being out of my money, I was forced to come the caster, and tumbled for five hundred, dead: besides which, I owe Crop, the lender, a brace; and if I have a single Simon to pay him, rot me. But the queer coll promises to advance me t'other three, and bring me home, provided you will let him sneak into your list for a cool thousand. You know it's a debt of honour in me, and will cost you nothing.

Yours in haste,

Robert Rattle."

Fran. The stile is extraordinary.

Gran. And his motives irresistible.

Sir Gilb. Nay, I have them from all nations; here's one now from an Irish relation of my own.

Fran. Oh! pray, let's see.

Sir Gilb. There.

[*Frankly reads.*

"Loving cousin, and my dear life.

"There is only my brother Patrick, and dat is two of us; and because we would have a great respect for our relations, we are come post from Tipperary, with a loving design to put both our families upon one anoder. And though we have no acquaintance with your brave daughters, we saw them yesterday at the cathedral church, and find they vil sharve us vel enough. And to shew our sincere affections, we vil taak dem vidout never a penny of money; only, as a small token of shivility upon your side, we desire the faavour of both of us each ten thousand in this same new subscription. And because, in our haste, some of our cloaths and bills of exchange were forgot, prydee be so grateful as to send us two score pounds, to put us into some worship for the mean time. So dis was all from, my dear life,

Your humble sarvant,

And loving relation,

Owen Mac Ogle."

Fran. A very modest epistle, truly!

Sir Gilb. Oh, here's my list.—Now, Mr. Granger, we'll see what we can do for you. Hold, here are some people

people that have no business here, I am sure—ay, here is Dr. Bullanbear, one thousand—Why, ay, I was forced to put him down to get rid of him. The man has no conscience. Don't I know he's in every court-list under a sham name? Indeed, Domine Doctor, you can't be here. [*Scratches him out.*] Then here's another favourite of my wife's too; Signor Caponi da Capo—two thousand—What, because he can get as much for a song, does he think to have it for whistling too?—Huh, huh, huh! not I, troth; I am not for sending our money into popish countries. [*Blots him out.*]

Fran. Rightly considered, Sir.

Sir Gilb. Let's see who's next——‘ Sir James Baker,

‘ Knt. one thousand.

‘ *Gran.* Who's he, Sir?

‘ *Sir Gilb.* Oh, a very ingenious person! he's well known at court; he must stand; besides, I believe we shall employ him in our Spanish trade——Oh! here we can you spare one, I believe—Sir Isaac Bickerstaff,

‘ Knt. one thousand.

‘ *Fran.* What, the fam'd censor of Great Britain?

‘ *Sir Gilb.* No, no, he was a very honest, pleasant fellow; this is only a relation, a mere whimsical, that will draw nobody's way but his own, and is always wiser than his betters. I don't understand that sort of wisdom, that's for doing good to every body but himself. Let those list him that like him; he shall ride in no troop of mine, odsheartlikins! [*Blots him.*]

‘ *Gran.* How he damns them with a dash, like a pro-scribing triumvir!

‘ *Sir Gilb.* Let's see.—I would fain have another for you——Oh, here! William Penkethman, one thousand. Ha, a very pretty fellow, truly! What, give a thousand pounds to a player! why, it's enough to turn his brain: we shall have him grow proud, and quit the stage upon it. No, no, keep him poor, and let him mind his business; if the puppy leaves off playing the fool, he's undone. No, no, I won't hurt the stage; my wife loves plays, and whenever she is there, I am sure of three hours quiet at home—[*Blots, &c.*]—Let's see; one, three, four, five; ay, just Frankly's sum—Here's five thousand for you, Mr. Granger, with a wet finger.

Gran. Sir, I shall ever be in your debt.

Sir Gilb. Pooh ! you owe me nothing.

Fran. You have the happiness of this life, Sir Gilbert, the power of obliging all about you.

Sir Gilb. Oh, Mr. Frankly, money won't do every thing ! I am uneasy at home for all this.

Fran. Is that possible, Sir, while you have so fine a lady ?

Sir Gilb. Ay, ay, you are her favourite, and have learning enough to understand her ; but she is too wise and too wilful for me.

Fran. Oh, Sir ! learning's a fine accomplishment in a fine lady.

Sir Gilb. Ay, it's no matter for that, she's a great plague to me. Not but my lord bishop, her uncle, was a mighty good man ; she lived all along with him ; I took her upon his word ; 'twas he made her a scholar ; I thought her a miracle ; before I had her, I used to go and hear her talk Latin with him an hour together ; and there I—I—I played the fool——I was wrong, I was wrong—I should not have married again—and yet, I was so fond of her parts, I begged him to give my eldest daughter the same fine education ; and so he did—but, to tell you the truth, I believe both their heads are turned.

Gran. A good husband, Sir, would set your daughter right, I warrant you.

Sir G. He must come out of the clouds, then ; for she thinks no mortal man can deserve her. What think you, Mr. Frankly, you had soon enough of her ?

Fran. I think still, she may deserve any mortal man, Sir.

Gran. I can't boast of my merit, Sir Gilbert ; but I wish you would give me leave to take my chance with her.

Sir Gilb. Will you dine with me ?

Gran. Sir, you shall not ask me twice.

Sir Gilb. And you, Mr. Frankly ?

Fran. Thank you, Sir ; I have had the honour of my Lady's invitation before I came out.

Sir Gilb. Oh, then, pray don't fail ; for when you are there, she is always in humour.

Gran. I hope, Sir, we shall have the happiness of the young lady's company too.

Sir Gilb. Ay, ay, after dinner I'll talk with you.

Fran. Not forgetting your favourite, Charlotte, Sir.

Sir Gilb. Look you, Mr. Frankly, I understand you ; you have a mind to my daughter Charlotte, and I have often told you I have no exceptions to you ; and therefore you may well wonder why I yet scruple my consent.

Fran. You have a right to refuse it, no doubt, Sir ; but I hope you can't blame me for asking it.

Sir Gilb. In troth, I don't ; and I wish you had it, with all my heart. But so it is—there's no comfort, sure, in this life ; for, though, by this glorious state of our stocks, I have raised my poor single plumb to a pomgranate, yet if they had not risen quite so high, you and I, Mr. Frankly, might possibly have been both happier men than we are.

Fran. How so, Sir ?

Sir Gilb. Why, at the price it now is, I am under contract to give one of the greatest coxcombs upon earth the refusal of marrying which of my daughters he pleases.

Gran. Hey-day ! What, is marriage a bubble too ?

[*Aside.*

Sir Gilb. Nay, and am bound in honour even to speak a good word for him. You know young Witling.

Fran. I could have guess'd your coxcomb, Sir ; but I hope he has not yet named the lady.

Sir Gilb. Not directly ; but I guess his inclinations, and expect every hour to have him make his call upon my consent according to form.

Fran. Is this possible ?

Gran. Sir, if he should happen to name Sophronia, will you give me leave to drub him out of his contract ?

Sir Gilb. By no means ; credit's a nice point, and people won't suppose that would be done without my connivance : ' beside, I believe Sophronia's in no danger. But ' because one can be sure of nothing, gentlemen, I demand both your words of honour, that, for my sake, ' you will neither of you use any acts of hostility.

Fran. Sir, in this case, you have a right to command us.

Sir Gilb. Your hands upon't.

Both. And our words of honour.

Sir Gilb. I am satisfied'—If we can find a way to out-

wit him, so; if not—Odso! here he comes—I beg your pardon, gentlemen; but I won't be in his way, till I cannot help it. Hum, hum! [Exit Sir Gilb.]

Gran. A very odd circumstance.

Fran. I am afraid there's something in it; and begin to think, now, my friend, Witling, (in his raillery yesterday with Charlotte) knew what he said himself, tho' he did not care whether any body else did.

Gran. Sure it cannot be real! I always took Witling for a beggar.

Fran. So he was, or very near it, some months ago; but since fortune has been playing her tricks here, she has rewarded his merit, it seems, with about an hundred thousand pounds out of Change-alley.

Gran. Nay, then he may be dangerous indeed.

Fran. I long to know the bottom of it.

Gran. That you can't fail of; for you know he is vain and familiar—and here he comes.

Enter Witling.

Wit. Ha, my little Granger! how dost thou do, child? Where the devil hast thou been this age? What's the reason you never come among us? Frankly, give me thy little finger, my dear.

Gran. Thou art a very impudent fellow, Witling.

Wit. Ay, it's no matter for that; thou art a pleasant one, I am sure; for thou always makest us laugh.

Fran. Us! What the devil dost thou mean by us, now?

Wit. Why, your pretty fellows, my dear; your *bons vivants*; your men of wit and taste, child.

Gran. I know very few of those; but I come from a country, Sir, where half the nation are just such pretty fellows as thou art.

Wit. Ha! that must be a pleasant place indeed! What, dost thou come from Paradise, child? Ha, ha, ha!

Fran. Don't you know he is just come from France, Sir?

Wit. You jest!

Gran. Why, ay—Now you see, Witling, your vanity has brought you into a fool's Paradise.

Wit. Oh, you pleasant cur! What, Paris, *quasi paradis*, or Paradise. Ha! I wish I had been with you: I am sure you would have thought it Paradise then.

Gran. Nay, now he's fairly in.

Wit. 'Tis impossible to be out on't, Sir, in your company ; wherever you are, it is always Paradise to me, depend upon't. Ha, ha !

Fran. Faith, Granger, there I think he came up with you.

Gran. Nay, since the rogue has money, we must, of course, allow him wit : but I think he is one of your good-natur'd ones ; he does not only find the jest, but the laugh too.

Wit. Ay, and to hear thee talk, child, how is it possible to want either ? Ha, ha !

Fran. Good again ! Well said, Witling ! Why, thou art as sharp to-day——

Wit. As a glover's needle, my dear ; I always dart it into your leather heads with three edges, ha, ha !

Gran. Pr'ythee, Witling, does not thy assurance sometimes meet with a repartee that only lights upon the outside of thy head ?

Wit. Oh, your servant, Sir ! What, now your fire's gone, you would knock me down with the butt-end, would you ? Ha ! it's very well, Sir ; I ha' done, Sir, I ha' done ; I see it's a folly to draw bills upon a man that has no assets.

Gran. And to do it upon a man that has no cash or thine in his hands, is the impudence of a bankrupt.

Wit. Psha ! a mere flash in the pan——' Well, well, it's all over'——Come, come, a truce, a truce ; I have done ; I beg pardon.

Gran. Why, thou vain rogue, thy good-nature has more impudence than thy wit. Dost thou suppose I can ever take any thing ill of thee.

Wit. Psha ! fie ! what dost thou talk, man ? Why, I know thou canst not live without me. Dost think I don't know how to make allowances ? Tho' if I have too much wit, and thou hast too little, how the devil can either of us help it, you know ? Ha, ha !

Fran. Ha, ha ! honest Witling is not to be put out of humour, I see.

Gran. No, faith, nor out of countenance——

Wit. Not I, faith, my friend ; and a man of turn may say any thing to me——Not but I see by his humour,

‘mour, something has gone wrong—I hold fix to four,
‘now, thou hast been crabbed at Paris in the Mississippi.

‘*Gran.* Not I, faith, Sir; I would no more put my
‘money into the stocks there, than my legs into the stocks
‘here. There’s no getting home again, when you have
‘a mind to it.

‘*Wit.* Ha! very good. But, pr’ythee, tell us; what;
‘is the Quinquipois as pleasant as our Change-alley
‘here?

‘*Gran.* Much the same comedy, Sir, where poor wise
‘men are only spectators, and laugh to see fools make
‘their fortune.

‘*Wit.* Ay, but there we differ, Sir; for there are men
‘of wit too, that have made their fortunes among us, to
‘my knowledge.

‘*Gran.* Very likely, Sir; when fools are flush of mo-
‘ney, men of wit won’t be long without it. I hear you
‘have been fortunate, Sir.

‘*Wit.* Humh—’Egad I don’t know whether he calls
‘me a wit or a fool.

‘*Gran.* Oh, fie! every body knows you have a great
‘deal of money.

‘*Fran.* And I don’t know any man pretends to more
‘wit.

‘*Wit.* Nay, that’s true too: but—’Egad, I believe he
‘has me.’

Gran. But, pr’ythee, Witling, how came a man of thy
parts ever to think of raising thy fortune in Change-al-
ley? How didst thou make all this money thou art mas-
ter of?

Wit. Why, as other men of wit and parts often do, by
having little or nothing to lose. I raised my fortune,
Sir, as Milo lifted the bull, by sticking to it every day,
when ’twas but a calf. I foused them with premiums,
child, and laid them on thick when the stock was low;
and did it all from a brass nail, boy. In short, by being
dirty once a day for a few months, taking a lodging at
my broker’s, and rising at the same hour I used to go to
bed at this end of the town. I have at last made up my
accounts, and now wake every morning master of five-
and-twenty hundred a year, *terra firma*, and pelf in my
ocket: I have fun in my job, beside, child.

Gran.

Gran. And all this out of Change-alley?

Wit. Every shilling, Sir; all out of stocks, puts, bulls, rams, bears, and bubbles.

‘*Gran.* These frolicks of Fortune do some justice at least; they sufficiently mortify the proud and envious, that have not been the better for them.

‘*Fran.* Oh, I know some are ready to burst even at the good fortune of their own relations!

‘*Wit.* ’Egad, and so do I; there’s that surly put, my uncle, the counsellor, won’t pull off his hat to me now. A poor slaving cur, that is not worth above a thousand a year, and minds nothing but his business——

‘*Fran.* And so is out of humour with you, because you have done that in a twelvemonth, that he has been drudging for these twenty years.

‘*Wit.* But I intend to send him word, if he does not mend his manners now, I shall disinheret him.’

Gran. What are we to think of this, Frankly? Is Fortune really in her wits, or is the world out of them?

Fran. Much as it used to be; she has only found a new channel for her tides of favour.

Wit. Pr’ythee, why dost not come into the Alley, and see us scramble for them? If you have a mind to philosophize there, there’s work for your speculation! ’Egad, I never go there, but it puts me in mind of the poetical regions of death, where all mankind are upon a level: there you’ll see a duke dangling after a director; here a peer and a ’prentice haggling for an eighth; there a Jew and a parson making up differences; here a young woman of quality buying bears of a quaker; and there an old one selling refusals to a lieutenant of grenadiers.

‘*Frank.* What a medley of mortals has he jumbled together!’

‘*Wit.* Oh, there’s no such fun in the universe!——’Egad, there’s no getting away. Perish me, if I’ve had time to see my mistress, but of a Sunday, these three months.

Gran. Thy mistress! What dost thou mean? Thou speakest as if thou hadst but one.

Wit. Why, no more. I have not, that I care a farthing for; I may perhaps have a stable of scrubs, to mount my footmen

footmen, when I rattle into town, or so ; but this is a choice pad, child, that I design for my own riding.

Frank. Pr'ythee, who is she ?

Wit. I'll shew you, my dear — I think I have her here in my pocket.

Gran. What dost thou mean ?

Wit. Look you, I know you are my friends ; and therefore since I am sure it is in nobody's power to hurt me, I'll venture to trust you.—There ! that's whoo, child.

[*Shews a Paper.*

Fran. What's here ?

[*Reads.*

“ To Sir GILBERT WRANGLE.

“ Sir, according to your contract of the 11th of February last, I now make my election of your younger daughter, Mrs. Charlotte Wrangle ; and do hereby demand your consent, to be forthwith join'd to the said Charlotte in the sober state of matrimony. Witness my hand, &c.

WILLIAM WITLING.”

Fran. What a merry world do we live in !

Gran. This indeed is extraordinary.

Wit. I think so : I assure you, gentlemen, I take this to be a *coup de maître* of the whole Alley. This is a call now, that none of your thick-sculled calculators could ever have thought on.

Gran. Well, Sir, and does this contract secure the lady's fortune to you too ?

Wit. Oh, pox ! I knew that was all rug before : he had settled three thousand a-piece upon them in the South Sea, when it was only about par, provided they married with his consent, which by this contract, you know, I have a right to. So there's another thirty thousand dead, my dear.

Fran. But pray, Sir, has not the lady herself a right of refusal, as well as you, all this while ?

Wit. A right ! aye, who doubts it ? Every woman has a right to be a fool, if she has a mind to it, that's certain : but Charlotte happens to be a girl of taste, my dear ; she is none of those fools that will stand in her own light, I can tell you.

Fran. Well, but do you expect she should blindly consent to your bargain ?

Wit. Blindly, no, child : but dost thou imagine any citizen's

citizen's daughter can refuse a man of my figure and fortune, with her eyes open ?

Gran. Impudent rogue !

[*Aside.*

Fran. Nay, I grant, your security's good, Sir : but I mean, you have still left her consent at large in the writing.

Wit. Her consent ! Didst thou think I minded that, man ? I knew, if the stock did but whip up, I should make no more of her than a poached egg. But to let you into the secret, my dear, I am secure of that already ; for the slut's in love with me, and does not know it : ha, ha, ha !

Fran. How came you to know it then ?

Wit. By her ridiculous pretending to hate me, child : for we never meet, but 'tis a mortal war, and never part, till one of us is rallied to death : ha, ha, ha !

Fran. Nay then, it must be a match ; for, I see, you are resolved to take no answer.

Wit. Not I, faith ! I know her play too well for that : in short, I am this very evening to attack her in form ; and to shew you I am a man of skill, I intend to make my first breach from a battery of Italian music, in which I design to sing my own *Io Pæan*, and enter the town in triumph.

Fran. You are not going to her now ?

Wit. No, no, I must first go and give the governor my summons here. I must find out Sir Gilbert ; he's hereabouts : I long to make him growl a little ; for I know he'll fire when he reads it, as if it were a *scire facias* against the company's charter. Ha, ha, ha ! [*Exit Wit.*

Fran. When all's said, this fellow seems to feel his 'fortune more than most of the fools that have been 'lately taken into her favour.'

Gran. 'Pox on him ! I had rather have his constitution than his money.' Pr'ythee let's follow, and see how the old gentleman receives him.

Fran. No ; excuse me ; I can't rest till I see Charlotte : you know, my affairs now require attendance.

Gran. That's true ; I beg you take no notice to Sophronia of my being in town ; I have my reasons for it.

Fran. Very well ; we shall meet at dinner. Adieu.

[*Exeunt severally.*

END of the FIRST ACT.

A C T

ACT II.

SCENE, *Sir Gilbert's House.**Sophronia and Charlotte.*

CHARLOTTE.

HA, ha, ha !

Soph. Dear sister, don't be so boisterous in your mirth : you really over-power me ! So much vociferation is insupportable.*Char.* Well, well, I beg your pardon—but, you know laughing is the wholesomest thing in the world ; and when one has a hearty occasion——*Soph.* To be vulgar, you are resolved to appear so.*Char.* Oh, I cannot help it, I love you dearly ; and, pray, where's the harm of it ?*Soph.* Look you, sister, I grant you, that risibility is only given to the *animal rationale* ; but you really indulge it, as if you could give no other proof of your species.*Char.* And if I were to come into your sentiments, dear sister, I am afraid the world would think I were of no species at all.*Soph.* The world, sister, is a generation of ignorants : and, for my part, I am resolved to do what in me lies, to put an end to posterity.*Char.* Why, you don't despair of a man, I hope !*Soph.* No ; but I will have all mankind despair of me.*Char.* You'll positively die a maid ?*Soph.* You, perhaps, may think that dying a martyr ; but I shall not die a brute, depend upon't.*Char.* Nay, I don't think you'll die either, if you can help it.*Soph.* What do you mean, Madam ?*Char.* Only, Madam, that you are a woman, and may happen to change your mind ; that's all.*Soph.* A woman ! That's so like your ordinary way of thinking ; as if souls had any sexes—No—when I die, Madam, I shall endeavour to leave such sentiments behind me, that—(*non omnis moriar*) the world will be convinced my purer part had no sex at all.*Char.*

Char. Why truly, it will be hard to imagine, that any one of our sex could make such a resolution; though, I hope, we are not bound to keep all we make neither.

Soph. You'll find, Madam, that an elevated soul may be always master of its perishable part.

Char. But, dear Madam, do you suppose our souls are crammed into our bodies merely to spoil sport, that a virtuous woman is only sent hither of a fool's errand? What's the use of our coming into the world, if we are to go out of it, and leave nobody behind us?

Soph. 'If our species can be only supported by those gross mixtures, of which cookmaids and footmen are capable, people of rank and erudition ought certainly to detest them.' Oh, what a pity 'tis the divine secret should be lost! I have somewhere read of an ancient naturalist, whose laborious studies had discovered a more innocent way of propagation; but, it seems, his tables unfortunately falling into his wife's hands, the gross creature threw them into the fire.

Char. Indeed, my dear sister, if you talk thus in company, people will take you for a mad-woman.

Soph. I shall be even with them, and think those mad, that differ from my opinion.

Char. But I rather hope the world will be so charitable, as to think this is not your real opinion.

Soph. I shall wonder at nothing that's said or thought by people of your sullied imagination.

Char. Sullied! I would have you to know, Madam, I think of nothing but what's decent and natural.

Soph. Don't be too positive, nature has it indecencies.

Char. That may be; but I don't think of them.

Soph. No! Did not you own to me just now, you were determined to marry?

Char. Well; and where's the crime, pray?

Soph. What! you want to have me explain? But I shall not defile my imagination with such gross ideas.

Char. But, dear Madam, if marriage were such an abominable business, how comes it that all the world allows it to be honourable? And I hope you won't expect me to be wiser than any of my ancestors, by thinking the contrary.

‘ *Soph.* No; but if you will read history, sister, you will find that the subjects of the greatest empire upon earth were only propagated from violated chastity: the Sabine ladies were wives, ’tis true, but glorious ravished wives. Vanquished they were indeed, but they surrendered not: they screamed, and cried, and tore, and as far as their weak limbs would give them leave, resisted and abhorred the odious joy——

‘ *Char.* And yet, for all that niceness, they brought a chopping race of rakes, that bullied the whole world about them.

‘ *Soph.* The greater still their glory, that though they were naturally prolific, their resistance proved they were not slaves to appetite.

‘ *Char.* Ah, sister! if the Romans had not been so sharp set, the glorious resistance of these fine ladies might have been all turned into coquetry.

‘ *Soph.* There’s the secret, sister: had our modern dames but the true Sabine spirit of disdain, mankind might be again reduced to those old Roman extremities; and our shameless brides would not then be led, but dragged to the altar; their *sponsalia* not called a marriage, but a sacrifice: and the conquered beauty, not the bridal virgin, but the victim.

‘ *Char.* Oh, ridiculous! and so you would have no woman married, that was not first ravished, according to law?

‘ *Soph.* I would have mankind owe their conquest of us rather to the weakness of our limbs, than of our souls. And if defenceless women must be mothers, the brutality, at least, should lie all at their door.’

Char. Have a care of this over-niceness, dear sister, lest some agreeable young fellow should seduce you to the confusion of parting with it. You’d make a most rueful figure in love!

Soph. Sister, you make me shudder at your freedom! I in love! I admit a man! What, become the voluntary, the lawful object of a corporeal sensuality! Like you, to choose myself a tyrant! a despoiler! a husband! Ugh.

Char. I am afraid, by this disorder of your thoughts,
 dear

dear sister, you have got one in your head, that you don't know how to get rid of.

Soph. I have, indeed; but it's only the male creature that you have a mind to.

Char. Why, that's possible too; for I have often observed you uneasy at Mr. Frankly's being particular to me.

Soph. If I am, 'tis upon your account, because I know he imposes upon you.

Char. You know it?

Soph. I know his heart, and that another is mistress of it.

Char. Another!

Soph. Another; but one that to my knowledge will never hear of him; so don't be uneasy, dear sister, all in my power you may be assured of.

Char. Surprisingly kind, indeed!

Soph. And you know too I have a great deal in my inclination——

Char. For me or him, dear sister?

Soph. Nay, now you won't suffer me to oblige you; I tell you, I hate the animal; and for half a good word would give him away.

Char. What! before you have him?

Soph. This affected ignorance is so vain, dear sister, that I now think it high time to explain to you.

Char. Then we shall understand one another.

Soph. You don't know, perhaps, that Mr. Frankly is passionately in love with me?

Char. I know, upon his treating with my father, his lawyer once made you some offers.

Soph. Why then you may know too, that upon my slighting those offers, he fell immediately into a violent despair.

Char. I did not hear of its violence.

Soph. So violent, that he has never since dared to open his lips to me about it; but to revenge the secret pains I gave him, has made his public addresses to you.

Char. Indeed, sister, you surprise me: and 'tis hard to say, that men impose more upon us, than we upon ourselves.

Soph. Therefore by what I have told you, you may now be convinced he is false to you.

Char. But is there a necessity, my dear Sophronia, that I must rather believe you than him? Ha, ha, ha!

Soph. How, Madam! Have you the confidence to question my veracity, by supposing me capable of an endeavour to deceive you?

Char. No hard words, dear sister: I only suppose you as capable of deceiving yourself, as I am.

Soph. Oh, mighty probable, indeed! You are a person of infinite penetration! Your studies have opened to you the utmost recesses of human nature; but let me tell you, sister, that vanity is the only fruit of toilette lucubrations. I deceive myself: ha, ha, ha!

Char. One of us certainly does! Ha, ha!

Soph. There I agree with you. Ha, ha!

Char. Till I am better convinced then on which side the vanity lies, give me leave to laugh in my turn, dear sister.

Soph. Oh, by all means, sweet Madam! Ha, ha!

Both. Ha, ha, ha!

Char. Oh, here's mamma; she perhaps may decide the question. Ha, ha!

Enter Lady Wrangle.

L. Wrang. So, Mrs. Charlotte! what wonderful nothing, pray, may be the subject of this mighty merriment?

Soph. Nothing indeed, Madam; or, what's next to nothing; a man, it seems. Ha, ha!

L. Wrang. Charlotte, wilt thou never have any thing else in thy head?

Char. I was in hopes, nothing, that was in my sister's head, would be a crime in mine, Madam,

L. Wrang. Your sister's! What? How? Who is it you are laughing at?

Char. Only at one another, Madam; but, perhaps, your ladyship may laugh at us both: for, it seems, my sister and I both insist, that Mr. Frankly is positively in love but with one of us.

L. Wrang. Who, child?

Soph. Mr. Frankly, Madam.

L. Wrang.

L. Wrang. Mr. Frankly in love with one of you!

Soph. Ay, Madam; but it seems we both take him to ourselves.

L. Wrang. Then Charlotte was in the right in one point.

Soph. In what, dear Madam?

L. Wrang. Why, that for the same reason you have been laughing at one another, I must humbly beg leave to laugh at you both—Ha, ha!

Char. So, this is rare sport. [*Aside.*

L. Wrang. But pray, ladies, how long has the chimera of this gentleman's passion for you been in either of your heads?

Soph. Nay, Madam, not that I value the conquest; but your ladyship knows he once treated with my father upon my account.

L. Wrang. I know he made that his pretence to get acquainted in the family.

Soph. Perhaps, Madam, I have more coercive reasons, but am not concerned enough at present to insist upon their validity.

L. Wrang. Sophronia, you have prudence. [*Sophronia walks by and reads.*] But what have you to urge, sweet lady? How came this gentleman into your head, pray?

Char. Really, Madam, I can't well say how he got in, but there he is, that's certain: what will be able to get him out again, heaven knows.

L. Wrang. Oh, I'll inform you then; think no more of him than he thinks of you, and I'll answer for your cure. Ha, ha, ha!

Char. I shall follow your prescription, Madam, when I am once sure how little he thinks on me.

L. Wrang. Then judge of that, when I assure you, that his heart is utterly and solely given up to me.

Soph. Well! I did not think my Lady had been capable of so much weakness. [*Aside.*

Char. How! to you, Madam? How is that possible, unless he makes you dishonourable offers?

L. Wrang. There's no occasion to suppose that neither; there are passions you have no notion of: he knows my

virtue is impregnable: but that——preserves him mine.

Char. Nay, this does puzzle me indeed, Madam.

Soph. If you had ever read Plato, sister, you might have known, that passions of the greatest dignity have not their source from veins and arteries.

L. Wrang. Sophronia, give me leave to judge of that; perhaps I don't insist that he is utterly Platonic neither: the mansion of the soul may have its attractions too; he is as yet but *udum & molle lutum*——and may take what form I please to give him.

Char. Well, Madam, since I see he is so utterly at your ladyship's disposal, and that 'tis impossible your virtue can make any use of him in my vulgar way; shall I beg your good word to my father, only to make me mistress of his mortal part?

L. Wrang. Heavens! what will this world come to?
 'This creature has scarce been two years from school, and yet is impatient for a husband?' No, Madam, you are too young as yet; but——*Cruda marito.* Your education is not yet finished; first cultivate your mind, correct and mortify these sallies of your blood; learn of your sister here, to live a bright example of your sex; refine your soul; give your happier hours up to science, arts, and letters; enjoy the raptures of philosophy, subdue your passions, and renounce the sensual commerce of mankind.

Char. Oh, dear Madam, I should make a piteous philosopher; indeed your ladyship had much better put me out to the business I am fit for: here's my sister has learning enough o'conscience for any one family; and, of the two, I had much rather follow your ladyship's example, and use my humble endeavours to increase it.

L. Wrang. My example! Do you suppose then, if I had been capable of gross desires, I would have chosen your father for the gratificator of them?

Char. Why not, Madam; my papa's a hale man, and though he has twice your ladyship's age, he walks as straight, and leads up a country-dance as brisk as a beau at a ball.

L. Wrang. Come, none of your sensual inferences from

from thence; I was governed by my parents, I had other views in marrying Mr. Wrangle.

Char. Yes, a swinging jointure. [*Aside.*]

L. Wrang. When you have gone through my studies, Madam, philosophy will tell you, 'tis possible a well-natured mind, though fated to a husband, may be at once a wife and virgin.

Char. Prodigious! [*Aside.*]

L. Wrang. What is't you smile at, Madam?

Char. Nothing, Madam, only I don't understand these philosophical mysteries; but if your ladyship will indulge me, in marrying Mr. Frankly, as for dying a maid afterwards, I'll take my chance for it.

L. Wrang. What a giddy confidence! But thou art strangely vain, Charlotte, to be so importunate for a man, that, as I have told thee, has the misfortune to be passionately in love with me.

Char. Indeed, indeed, Madam, if your ladyship would but give him leave to open his mind freely, he would certainly tell you another story.

L. Wrang. I will send for him this minute, and convince you of your error.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Madam, Mr. Frankly.

L. Wrang. He never came more opportunely: desire him to walk in.

Enter Mr. Frankly.

L. Wrang. Oh, Mr. Frankly, the welcomest man alive.

Fran. Then I am the happiest, I am sure, Madam.

L. Wrang. Oh, fy! is there any one of this company could make you so?

Fran. There's one in the company, Madam, has a great deal more in her power, than I'm afraid she'll part with to me.

Soph. Are you this hard-hearted lady, sister? Does this description reach you, pray? [*Aside.*]

Char. The power does not describe you, I'll answer for it. [*Aside.*]

L. Wrang. Nay, now you grow particular——You have something to say to one of these ladies, I'm sure.

[*To Frankly.*]

Fran.

Fran. I have something, Madam, to say to both of them.

Soph. Shall we let him speak, sister?

Char. Freely.

L. Wrang. Which of these two, now, if you were free to choose, could you really give up your heart to?

Fran. Oh, Madam! as to that, I dare only say, as Sir John Suckling did upon the same occasion.

Soph. Pray, what was that?

Fran. He sure is happiest that has hopes of either;

Next him is he that sees you both together.

L. Wrang. Perfectly fine—Nor is there more wit in the verses themselves, than in your polite application of them—Mr. Frankly, I must beg your pardon—I know it's rude to whisper; but you have good-nature; and, to oblige a woman——

Fran. Is the business of my life, Madam—What the devil can all this mean? I have been oddly catechized here—Sure they have not all agreed to bring me to a declaration for one of them—It looks a little like it—‘But then, how comes Charlotte into so vain a project? Nay, so hazardous! She can't but know, my holding the other two in play, has been the only means of my getting admittance to her—Perhaps they may have piqued her into this experiment—not unlikely.’ But I must be cautious. [*Aside.*]

L. Wrang. Nay, ladies, you can't but say I laid you fairly in his way. [*Apart to Soph. and Char.*] And yet you see from how palpable a regard to me he has ingenuously avoided a declaration, for either of you, at least.

Soph. Your ladyship won't be offended, if, for a moment, we should suspend your conclusion.

L. Wrang. Not in the least; if suspense can make you happy, live always in it.

Char. But, pray, Madam, let him go on a little.

L. Wrang. Oh, you shall have enough of him. Well, you are a horrid tyrant, Mr. Frankly. Don't you plainly see, here are two ladies in this company, that have a mind you should declare in favour of one of them?

Fran. Yes, Madam; but I plainly see, there are three ladies in the company.

L. Wrang. What then?

Fran.

Fran. Why, then, Madam, I am more afraid of offending that third person, than either of the other two.

L. Wrang. [*To Soph. and Char.*] Observe his diffidence, his awe; he knows I love respect.

Soph. With submission, Madam, I never was familiar with him.

L. Wrang. Come, now, do you both ask the question, as I have done, each exclusive of herself.

Char. Your ladyship's in the right——— [*Aside.* Sir, without any apology then, I am obliged to ask you, whether it be my Lady or my sister, you are really in love with?

Fran. So, now it's plain. [*Aside.*] When either of them ask me, you'll be out of the question, I can assure you, Madam.

L. Wrang. Ha, ha!

Soph. Who's in the question now, sister?

Char. If I had put myself in, you would not have been there, I'll answer for him. [*Aside.*

Soph. Then, I'll do you that favour, Madam.

Fran. So, now the other—but I am ready for her too.

Soph. You see, Sir, the humour we are in: though don't suppose, if I ask you the same question, 'tis from the same motive; but since these ladies have obliged me to it—Which of them is it you sincerely are a slave to?

Fran. Since I find your motive is only complaisance to them, Madam, I hope you will not think it needs an answer.

Soph. I am satisfied—Your ladyship was pleased to mention respect—I think there's respect and demonstration too, Madam. [*Aside to L. Wrang.*

L. Wrang. I grant it; 'but both to me, child.' But I will speak once more for all of us—Sir, that you may not be reduced to farther ambiguities, suppose we are all agreed, you should have leave to declare which of us, then, your heart is utterly in the disposal of?

Fran. Then I must suppose, Madam, that one of you have a mind I should make the other two my enemies.

L. Wrang. All your friends, depend upon us.

Fran. So were all the three goddesses to Paris, Madam,

till he presumed to be particular, and rashly gave the apple to Venus—You know, Madam, Juno was his immortal enemy ever after.

————— *Manet alia mente repōitum*

Judicium Paridis, spretaque injuria formæ.

L. Wrang. Sir, you are excus'd; the modesty and elegance of your reply has charmed me.

Soph. Now, sister, was this delicacy of his taste and learning shewn to recommend himself to me or you, think you?

Char. Oh, I don't dispute its recommending him to you.

Soph. He thinks it does, depend upon't.

Char. Though I can hardly think that of him, yet I can't say, indeed, he has taken much pains to recommend himself to me all this while. I see no reason, because they are to be respected, forsooth, that I may not be pleased in my turn too. [To herself.]

Fran. And now, ladies, give me leave to ask you a question.

L. Wrang. You may command us, Sir.

Fran. Then, whose cruel proposal was it to urge me to a declaration of my heart, when you all knew there was not one of you, from the disposition of whose mind or circumstances, I could hope the least favour or mercy.

L. Wrang. Explain yourself.

Fran. Why, first, Madam, as to your ladyship, you are honourably disposed of; from you my utmost vanity could no more form a hope, than could your virtue give it—And here, [To *Soph.*] if possible, my fate were harder still—here I must have to encounter rivals numberless and invincible.

Soph. Rivals!

Fran. Ay, Madam, is not every volume in your library a rival? Do you not pass whole days; nay, sometimes, happier nights, with them alone? 'The living and 'the dead promiscuous in your favour?' Old, venerable sages, even in their graves, can give you raptures, from whose divine enjoyment no mortal lover can persuade you.

Soph. [To *Char.*] Is this to please you, sister?

Char. Truly, I think not—he has mistaken the way, at least.

Fran. [Turning to *Char.*] And here, Madam——

L. Wrang.

L. Wrang. Hold, Sir; a truce with your negatives, lest they grow too vehement in their affirmation. You have hitherto my esteem, preserve it by your discretion, and force me not to revoke the freedom I have this day given you. Sophronia, I have carried this matter to the very utmost limits of discretion. I hope you and your sister are now delivered from your error; if not, I'll instantly withdraw, and leave you to a full conviction. [*Exit.*]

Fran. I am afraid my Lady takes something ill of me.

Soph. Sir, what you have done was from her own desire; and since I partly am the occasion, it is but just I stand engaged for your reconciliation.

Fran. Then give me leave to hope, Madam——

Soph. From what pretension, Sir? From any weakness of my behaviour? Hope! Do you consider the licentious and extensive consequences of that odious word? Hope! You make me tremble at the thought.

Fran. Madam, I only mean——

Soph. I know your meaning, Sir: and therefore must not hear it.

Fran. This is new with a vengeance! [*Aside.*]

Soph. Sister, 'I am sorry our argument has reduced me to stand so outrageous an instance of your conviction; but you may profit from the insult:' you may now learn to moderate your vanity, and to know yourself. Oh, 'tis a heavenly lesson!——*E cælo descendit gnothe scauton.* [*Exit.*]

Fran. What a solid happiness is now crept into her mind through the crack of her brain?—I hope you are not going too, Madam?

Char. I don't know any business I have here.

Fran. So——'Egad, I have disoblged them all, I believe. [*Aside.*] You are not out of humour?

Char. I don't know whether I am or no.

Fran. So cold, Charlotte, after I have had my wits upon the stretch this half hour, to oblige you?

Char. What, in blowing up other people's vanity at my expence?

Fran. Would you have had me blown up their jealousy, at the expence of my being well with you?

Char. You, that are so dexterous in imposing upon others, may impose upon me too, for ought I know.

‘*Fran.* Come, come, don’t impose upon yourself, Charlotte, by this groundless, this childish resentment.

‘*Char.* She that has no resentment at all, may be under-treated as long as she lives, I find.’

Fran. Pray, think a little. Is my having made them ridiculous by your own consent, exposing you to them, or them to you?

Char. I don’t know how the matter’s contrived; but I certainly find myself uneasy, and you can’t persuade me I am not so.

Fran. Well, well; since you can’t justify your being in an ill humour, it’s a fair step, at least, to your coming into a good one.

Char. Come, I will not be wheedled now.

Fran. Nay, but hear me.

Sophronia enters unseen, while Frankly seems to entertain Charlotte apart.

Soph. What can these creatures be doing alone together? ‘I thought I left my sister in too ill a humour to retire with him; but I see these carnage-lovers have such a meanness in their souls, they’ll overlook the grossest usage to accommodate their sensual concorporation.’ ’Tis so—her eyes have lost all resentment already. But I must not be seen, lest they mistake my innocent curiosity for jealousy.

Char. Well, but you might have thrown in a civil thing to me in my turn too.

Fran. Alas, poor lady! Pray, what one civil thing did I mean to any body but yourself? Besides, was not you one of the three goddesses, Miss Charlotte? Which of the company do you suppose I meant by Venus, pray?

Char. How silly you make me?

Fran. Nay, I was going to say a great deal more to you, if my Lady had not stopped my mouth.

Soph. Is it possible? [*Aside.*]

Char. Why, then, I beg your pardon; for, in short, I find I have only been fool enough to be uneasy, because they had not sense enough to be mortified.

Fran. A pretty innocent confession, truly!

Soph. Have I my senses?

Char. Well, but tell me, what was it you had a mind to say to me?

Fran.

Fran. Nothing to what I now could say — Oh, Charlotte, my heart grows full of you; the least look of kindness softens me to folly! — Indeed I love you.

Soph. Soh ———

Char. And for what, after all? [*Smiling.*]

Fran. For that, and for a thousand charms beside. [*Pressing her hand.*] There's something in your looks so soft, so gentle, so resign'd, and plaintive; I loved before I knew it, and only thought I gave the pity that I wanted.

Char. What transport's in the passion, when the tenderness is mutual!

Soph. Oh, the enormous creature! but I'll begone, lest her intoxication should know no bounds — No, on second thoughts, I'll stay; 'this odious object may be useful; 'vipers, if rightly taken, are preservatives: and as the 'Spartans taught their children to abhor intemperance, 'by shewing them their slaves exposed, and senseless in 'their wine; so I, in contemplation of this folly, may 'be fortified against it.' Oh, the abandoned wantons! — 'What a riotous disorder now must run through every 'vein of her whole system? How can they thus deface 'the dignity of human being?' — [*During this Fr. and Char. seem in an amorous dispute, till he kisses her.*] — A kiss! nay, then, 'tis insupportable. [*She goes to them.*] Sister, I am amazed you can stand trifling here, when my father is come home, and you know he wants you.

Char. She has certainly seen us. [*Aside to Fran.*]

Fran. No matter; seem easy, and take no notice.

[*Apart to Char.*]

Soph. Shall I tell him you will not come, Madam?

Char. Well, do not be in a passion, dear sister.

Fran. Oh, fie! why should you think so? But is Sir Gilbert come in, Madam? I have a little business with him. If you please, Madam, I'll wait upon you to him.

Char. With all my heart.

Fran. *Amante sposo, &c.* [*singing.*]

[*Exeunt Fran. and Char.*]

Soph. What means this turbulence of thought? 'Why 'am I thus disordered?' It cannot, nay, I will not have it jealousy — No, if I were capable of folly, Granger might mislead me; yet still I am disturbed — 'Yes, 'tis
D plain,

‘plain, I am incensed, provoked at him;’ but can I not assign the cause?—Oh, I have found it!—Having first offered up his heart to me, his giving it to another, without my leave, is an insult on my merit, and worthy my resentment—that’s all—How, then, shall I punish him? By securing her to his rival. Witling shall have her; I’ll work it by my Lady; she seems his friend—‘Yes, yes, that will entirely ease my heart. How I rejoice to find ‘tis only decent pride that has disturbed me. Yes, I’ll certainly resent it, to their mutual disappointment.’ Thus both shall suffer, doom’d to different fates: His be despair; be hers, the man she hates.

[Exit.

END of the SECOND ACT.

ACT III.

Lady Wrangle, and Sophronia.

LADY WRANGLE.

IMPOSSIBLE! You amaze me! Kifs her, say you? What, as a lover, amorously, voluptuously?

Soph. Infamously, with all the glowing fervour of a libertine.

L. Wrang. Then I am deceived indeed. ‘I thought that virtue, letters, and philosophy, had only charms for him: I have known his soul all rapture in their praises; nay, and believed myself the secret object of them all. But is he vulgar, brutal, then, at last? No Punic faith so false. ’Tis well; he has deceived me, and I hate him. Oh, that forward creature!’

‘*Soph.* She warms as I could wish. [Aside.

‘*L. Wrang.* But, tell me, dear Sophronia, how did that naughty girl behave to him? Was the shame chiefly his? Did she resist, or—how was this odious kifs obtained? Were his persuasions melting, or her allurements artful? Was he ensnared, or did his wiles seduce her?’ Oh, tell me all his baseness! I burn to know, yet wish to be deceived.

Soph. —*Speratque miserrima falli*—Directly jealous of him; but I’ll make my uses of it. [Aside.] Nay, Madam, I must

I must own the guilty part was chiefly hers. Had you but seen the warm advances that she made him, 'the looks, the smiles, the toying glances; Oh, such wanton blandishments to allure him!' you would think his crime, compared to hers, but frailty.

L. Wrang. Oh, the little sorceress! But I shall stop her in her loose career: I'll have her know, forward as she is, her inclinations shall wait upon my choice; and since she will run riot, I'll have her clogged immediately. I'll marry her, Sophronia; but, where I think fit. No, Mr. Witling is her man, or she's a maid for ever.

Soph. That, Madam, I doubt, she will never be brought to; she mortally hates him.

L. Wrang. So much the better; I do not design him, therefore, as her happiness, but her punishment.

Soph. This is fortunate; she even prevents my purpose. [*Aside.*

L. Wrang. Oh, that a man of his sublime faculties could fall from such a height! Was ever any thing so mean, Sophronia?

Soph. I am surprized indeed. My sister, too, is so illiterate, Madam.

L. Wrang. To contaminate his intellects with such a chit of an animal; *O tempora!*

Soph. *O mores!* 'Tis a degenerate age, indeed, Madam.

L. Wrang. Nothing but noise and ignorance; girls and vanity have their attractions now.

Soph. Oh, there's no living, Madam, while coquettes are so openly tolerated among a civilized people!

L. Wrang. I protest, they are so insolently insidious, they are become mere nuisances to all innocent society.

Soph. I am amazed the government should not set the idle creatures to work.

L. Wrang. The wisdom of our ancestors restrained such horrid licences; and, you see, the laws they made, described them all by the modest term of spinsters only. But I'll take care of her, at least; and since she is become a public mischief, to humble her will be a public good. I'll send to Mr. Witling this moment, and invite him to dine here. I desire you will be in the way, child, and assist me in bringing this matter to a speedy conclusion.

[*Exit.*
Soph.

Soph. Yes, I shall assist you, Madam; though not to gratify your resentments, but my own. Poor lady! is this then all the fruit of your philosophy? 'Is this her conduct of the passions, not to endure another should possess what she pretends to scorn? Are these her self-denials? Where, where was her self-examination all this while? The least inquiry there had shewn these passions as they are: then had she seen, that all this anger at my sister was but envy: those reproaches on her lover, jealousy; even that jealousy, the child of vanity, and her avowed resentment, malice!' Good Heaven! Can she be this creature, and know it not?—And yet 'tis so—so partial's Nature to herself,

‘That charity begins, where knowledge shou'd,

‘And all our wisdom's counsell'd by the blood:’

The faults of others we with ease discern,

But our own frailties are the last we learn.

[*Going off she meets Frankly and Charlotte?*
Ha! perpetually together!

Char. In contemplation, sister? I am afraid we disturb you: come, Mr. Frankly, we'll go into the next room.

Soph. No, Madam, if you have any secrets, I'll retire,

Char. Nay, we have none now, sister, but what I dare swear you are certainly let into: ha, ha, ha!

Fran. So she must have a gentle insult, I find; but it will be prudent in me to keep the peace. [*Aside.*

Soph. These taunts are insupportable! but to confess the smart, were adding to her triumph. [*Aside.*

Char. Why so grave, Sophronia?

Soph. Why that question, Madam? Do you often see me otherwise?

Char. No; but I thought, upon your supposing we had secrets, you drew up a little.

Soph. 'Tis possible, I might not be in a laughing humour, without thinking any of your secrets important.

Fran. People, Madam, that think much, always wear a serious aspect. [*To Char.*

Soph. As the contrary, sister, may be a reason for your continual mirth.

Char. Well, well; so I am but happy, sister, I am content you should be wise as long as you live.

Soph.

THE REFUSAL.

41

Soph. You have one sign of wisdom, I see: a little thing contents you—There's no bearing her. [*Ex. Soph.*

Char. She's in a high miss.

Fran. I am afraid there is no good towards us: I observed my lady, as she passed too, had much the same cloud upon her brow.

Char. Then she has certainly told her how she caught us fooling together.

Fran. No doubt on't; therefore we must expect all the mischief that either of them can do us.

Char. My sister can't do us much, at least.

Fran. She can blow up my lady; and, you know, my lady governs your father.

Char. She does a little overbear him indeed; not but he will make his party good with her upon occasion: I have known it come to a drawn battle between them, especially when he has any body to stand by him. A sad life though, Mr. Frankly, when conjugal engagements are only battles; does not their example frighten you?

Fran. I can see no hazard, in taking my chance with you, Madam.

Sophronia returns, and stops short, seeing Frankly taking Charlotte's hand.

Soph. So! closing again the minute they are alone; but I shall make bold with them. [*Goes forward.* Pray, sister, what did you do with that book of mine you took up this morning?

Char. What book?

Soph. The Confucius, you know, in my chamber.

Char. Oh, I did not mind it; I left it upon the green table.

Soph. Very well——that's all——I beg your pardon. What a melancholy sight she is!

[*Exit, and drops her handkerchief.*

Fran. This book was only a pretence to break in upon us.

Char. Plainly——she haunts us like the ghost in Hamlet. But pray, what talk had you with my father just now?

Fran. A great deal; we are upon very good terms there, I can tell you: but his conscience, it seems, is under the most ridiculous dilemma, sure, that ever was.

D?

Char.

Char. What do you mean?

Fran. If you will have patience to hear it, I'll tell you.

Char. I shall have no patience till I do hear it.

Fran. You must know then, some time ago, 'Sir Gilbert happened in a mixed company in Change-Alley, to join in a laugh at Mr. Witling, 'for his folly (as it was then thought) in giving out premiums for the refusal of South-Sea stock at an extravagant price: the beau being piqued to an intemperance, to see his bargains a jest, offered, in heat of blood, to back his judgment with more money, for a harder bargain, and ten times as chimerical.

Char. Ay, now let's hear.

Fran. Thus it was: he told an hundred guineas into your father's hand; in consideration of which, (if Witling could prove himself worth fifty thousand pounds within the year, and the South-Sea stock should in that time mount to a thousand per cent. why then, and on those conditions only) your father was to give him the refusal of you, or your sister, in marriage. 'This whimsical offer turned the laugh of the company to the beau's side, at which Sir Gilbert, impatient of his triumph, and not being in the least apprehensive either of the stocks rising to that price, or that this rattle-headed fellow could possibly make such a fortune in that time, fairly took the money, and signed the contract.' Now the stock, it seems, is come up to his price, and the spark has actually proved himself worth near double the sum he conditioned for.

Char. For heaven's sake! am I to take all this seriously?

Fran. Upon my life 'tis true: but don't mistake the matter; Sir Gilbert has left his daughter's inclinations free: there is no force to be put upon them in the bargain.

Char. Oh, then I can take my breath again.

Fran. No, no; you are safe as to that point: you may do as you please; he has only tied up his own consent. But Witling having this call upon it, Sir Gilbert is incapable, as he says, of giving it, at present, to me.

Char.

Char. Well; but in the mean time, suppose he should give it to you; what's the penalty?

Fran. That's true; I had like to have forgot it: the penalty is this; if Sir Gilbert refuses his consent, then he is to give Witling an alternative of the three thousand pounds stock only, at two hundred. So low it seems was the price when this bargain was made.

Char. A pinching article: I am afraid my good father has not distaste enough for a coxcomb, to part with his stock, and not toss him a daughter in the bargain.

Fran. Ay, but consider; Sir Gilbert is not to part with his stock neither, if you refuse to marry the gentleman.'

Char. Why then the fool has given his money for nothing; at least I am sure he has, if he makes his call upon me.

Fran. Ay, but here's the misfortune; the fool has been wise enough to do that already: Sir Gilbert tells me, he has insisted upon you; and you may be sure my lady, and your sister, will do all in their power to hold your father to his bargain: so that, while the contract's valid, it will not be even in your power, Charlotte, to complete my happiness this half year.

Char. It gives me at least occasion to shew you a new proof of my inclination; for I confess, I shall be as uneasy as you, 'till, one way or other, this ridiculous bargain is out of that coxcomb's hands again.'

Fran. Oh, Charlotte! lay your hand upon my heart, and feel how sensibly it thanks you.

Char. Foolish!

Sophronia enters, as looking for her handkerchief, and observes them.

Soph. Monstrous! actually embracing him! What have her transports made her blind too? Sure she might see me.

Char. Be but ruled, and I'll engage to manage it.

Fran. I have a lucky thought, that certainly——'

Char. Peace! break thee off! Lo! where it comes again.

Fran. Speak to it, Horatio——

[*Seeing Soph.*

Char. Do you want any thing, sister?

Soph.

Soph. Ay! did not I drop an handkerchief here?

Char. I did not see any——Oh, here——I believe this is it. [Gives it her.]

[They all stand gravely mute for some time, at last; Charlotte, as uneasy at her company, speaks.]

Char. Do you want any thing else, sister?

Soph. *[Turning short upon her.]*——Yes, Madam——Patience——to support me under your injurious assurance.

Char. Keep your temper, sister, lest I should suspect your philosophy to be only an affectation of knowledge you never could arrive at,

Soph. There are some surprises, Madam, too strong for all the guards of human constancy.

Char. Yet I have heard you say, Madam, 'tis a narrowness of mind to be surpris'd at any thing.

Soph. To be amazed at the actions of the unjust, and the abandoned, is a weakness that often arises from innocence and virtue: you must therefore pardon me, if I am astonished at your behaviour.

Fran. So! I suppose I shall have my share presently. [Aside.]

Char. My behaviour, Madam, is not to be aspersed by outrage; and if I am not astonished at yours, 'tis because the folly of it ought to move no passion but laughter.

Soph. This to me! to me, Mrs. Charlotte?

Char. Ay, ay! to you, Mrs. Sophronia.

Fran. I beg your pardon, ladies, I see you have private business. [Going.]

Soph. No, Sir,——hold——you are at least an accomplice, if not the principal, in the injury I complain of.

Fran. You do me a great deal of honour, Madam, in supposing any thing in my power could disturb you; but pray, Madam, wherein have I been so unhappy as to injure you?

Soph. In the tenderest part; my fame, my sense, my merit, and (as the world esteems it) in my sex's glory.

Fran. Accumulated wrongs, indeed! But really, Madam,

'Madam, I am yet in the dark; I must beg you to explain a little farther.'

Soph. Then plainly thus, Sir: you have robbed me of my right; the vows of love you once preferred to me, are by the laws of honour, without my consent, irrevocable: but, like a vile apostate, you have since presumed to throw your scornful malice on my attractions, by basely kneeling to another.

Char. Oh, the painful conflicts of prudery! [*Aside.*

Fran. 'This is hard indeed, Madam, that the loss of what you never thought worth your acceptance, should be worth your resentment.' If a beggar should ask you charity, would you call it an injury, if, upon refusing it, the wretch should beg of the next passenger?

Char. Well; is not that prettily said now, sister?

Soph. The case is different—You owe me tribute as your rightful conqueror; and though I have declined the tasteless triumph of your homage, that's no remittance of the duty: nor can you pay it to the usurper of my right, without rebellious perjury to me.

Fran. Hoyty! toyty! 'Egad there will be no end of this—I must even talk downright to her. [*Aside.*

Soph. Oblations vow'd to a peculiar power, are to its peculiar altars only due; and though the offering might be ill-received, yet should the murmuring suppliant dare to invoke another's aid, his vows are then become profane and impious to the Deity.

Char. So! since he would not make her a goddess, I find she's resolved to make one of herself. [*Aside.*

Fran. Now really, Madam, if I were to put all this into plain English, the translation would amount to no more than this, that your offended deity is a mere dog in a manger: what the deuce, because you don't love oats, must nobody else eat them! Ha, ha!

Char. Ha! ha! ha!

Soph. Amazement! horror! I am shocked and shivered to a thousand atoms! Oh, my violated ears!

Fran. Ay, ay! Madam, you may give yourself as many romantic airs as you please; but, in short, I can play the civil hypocrite no longer.

Soph. Ye powers above, he triumphs in brutality!

Fran. That is, Madam, because you will always take civility,

civility for adoration. But however, to clear up this whole matter; if, for once, you can reduce yourself from a deity to what nature has made you, a woman of sense, I'll beg pardon for my brutality, and speak to you like a gentleman.

Soph. You may suppose me then to have the sense you speak of.

Fran. Why then I own, Madam, when first I came from travel, my good father, on whom I then depended, recommended me to an alliance in this family: I thought myself honoured in his commands; and being equally a stranger to you and your sister, I judged, as being the elder, you had a natural right to the preference of my addresses: I saw you, saw your person lovely, adorned with all those charms that usually inspire the lover's tongue to bend the ear of beauty——

Char. How she drops her eyes at it! [*Aside.*

Fran. But on a nearer converse, I found you scarce a mortal in your sentiments; so utter a disdain of love had you imbibed from your romantic education: now wonder I succeeded not: I shall not reproach you with my peculiar treatment: you pleased yourself, and I re-treated. On this I thought my heart at liberty to try its better fortune here. Here I am fix'd, and justify my love; where then is the injury to you, in laying at your sister's feet a heart, which your disdain rejected!

Soph. 'Tis true, while offered with impure desires: while sensually, and as a woman only, you pursued me: but had you greatly sought the marriage of the mind; the social raptures of the soul; I might perhaps have cherished an intellectual union.

Fran. Ah! but dear, dear Madam, those raptures in the air would not do my business; I want an heir to my family, and in plain terms my case requires one that will give a little bodily help to it.

Soph. Nay then again, I must disclaim you; a heart so tainted would but sully the receiver: the shrine's dishonoured by a polluted sacrifice.

Char. So! she's at her old flights again. [*Aside.*

Soph. Thus then I fly for ever from your hopes——

Thus

Thus Daphne triumph'd o'er Apollo's flame,
And to his heav'n prefer'd a virgin's name :
The vanquish'd God pursu'd, but to despair,
While deathless laurels crown'd the flying fair.

[Exit.

Fran. So! there's one plague over; I have discharged my conscience upon her at least.

Char. Ha! ha! what a pretty way, though, my good sister has, of turning a slight into a triumph! But she has a great heart.

Fran. O! 'twould be hard to deny her that satisfaction; beside, the greatest heart in the world did just the same: we have known the late *grand monarque* lose many a Battle; but it was bloody hard to beat him out of a *Te Deum*.

Char. Well, but now, how shall we manage my father?

Fran. Here he comes.

Enter Sir Gilbert.

Sir. Gibb. So, Mr. Frankly! you see I give you fair play—and, troth, I have a great respect for you—but—a—a bargain's a bargain; if another man has really paid for my consent, you must not take it ill, if I don't refuse him.

Fran. I can't pretend to ask it, Sir: I think it favour enough, if you don't oblige your daughter to refuse me.

Sir. Gibb. Not I, not I, man; that's out of the question: she may please herself, and if Witling should not please her; troth! I cannot say it would not please me too: in short, if you two have wit enough to make up the difference, and bring me off—why there's no more to be said—If not—accounts must be made up—I have taken the premium, and must stand to my contract: for let me tell you, Sir, we citizens, are as tender of our credit in Change-Alley, as you fine gentlemen are of your honour at court.

Fran. Sir, depend upon it, your credit shall not suffer by me, whatever it may by your comparison.

Sir. Gibb. Why, what ails the comparison? Sir, I think the credit of the city may be compared to that of any body of men in Europe.

Fran.

Fran. Yes, Sir; but you mistake me: I question if any bodies may be compared to that of the city.

Sir Gilb. O! your humble servant, Sir; I did not take you——ay, ay, you're right! you're right! Ay, ay, ay, live and learn, Mr. Frankly: you'll find 'tis not your court, but city politicians must do the nation's business at last. Why, what did your courtiers do all the last reigns, but borrow money to make war, and make war to make peace, and make peace to make war; and then to be bullies in one, and bubbles in t'other? A very pretty account truly; but we have made money, man: money! money! there's the health and life-blood of a government: and therefore I insist upon it, that we are the wisest citizens in Europe; for we have coined more cash in an hour, than the tower of London in twenty years.

Fran. Nay, you govern the world now, its plain, Sir, and truly that makes us hope it's upon the mending hand: for since our men of quality are got so thick into Change-Alley, who knows but in time a great man's word may go as far as a tradesman's?

Sir Gilb. Ah! a wag, a wag! In troth, Mr. Frankly, the more I know you, the more I like you: I see you know the world, you judge of men by their intrinsic value; and you're right! you're right! titles are empty things. A wise man will always be a wise man, whether he has any title or no.

Fran. Ay, ay, Sir, and when a fool gets one, he's only known to be a greater fool.

Sir Gilb. You're right again: besides, Sir, shall any man value himself upon a thing that another may buy for his money as well as he? Ridiculous——a very pretty business truly, to give ten or twenty thousand pounds, only to be called out of one's name: Ha, ha, ha!

Fran. Nay, Sir, and perhaps too, losing the privilege of a private subject, that of being believed upon your honour, or trusted upon your word.

Sir Gilb. Honour's a joke! Is not every honest man a man of honour?

Fran. Ay, but the best joke is, that every man of honour is not an honest man, Sir.

Sir Gilb. Odsbodlikins, Mr. Frankly, you are an ingenious gentleman, and I must have you into my family, though

though it cost me twenty thousand pounds to keep that pragmatical fellow out on't.

Fran. ' If I have any pretence to your favour, Sir, I will take care your family shall not suffer by my coming into it: for if the worst must happen, 'tis but waiting till the other half year of Witling's contract is expired. I dare answer your daughter won't run away with him in the mean time.

Sir Gilb. Ay, but there's the question: is the girl staunch? Are you sure now, that like a young hound, she may not gallop away with the rank scent of a coxcomb, and so spoil your sport?

Fran. ' I dare say she will take this fear for a favour'—best examine her yourself, Sir.

Sir Gilb. Come hither, Charlotte.

Char. Your pleasure, Sir?

Sir Gilb. Are you sure you are as wise as other fine ladies of your age, that know more of mankind than their fathers, and consequently have a natural aversion to all husbands of their choosing? In short have you learnt enough of the world, to be heartily disobedient upon occasion?

Char. When you please to give me the occasion, Sir, I will try what I can do.

Sir Gilb. Humh! she promises fair. [*To Frankly aside.*] The girl has wit——But now, child, the question is whether you have common sense or no (for they don't always go together.) Are you smoky? Have you all your eye-teeth yet? Are you peery, as the cant is? In short do you know what I would be at now?

Char. Will you give me leave to guess, Sir?

Sir Gilb. Out with it.

Char. Why then, (I hope at least, Sir) you have a mind to make Witling believe, you are doing all in your power to bring his bargain to bear; and at the same time wish I would do all in my power to bring it to nothing.

Sir Gilb. [*Aside.*] It will do! it will do! Mr. Frankly; tell her she's right; you know it is not honest for me to say so: a hum!

Char. In short, Sir, if you'll leave the matter to my discretion, I'll engage to bring you off.

Sir Gilb. Bring me off, hussy! why; have you the

confidence to suppose I won't do the fair thing by the gentleman?

Char. I have not the confidence to suppose you would do a hard thing by this gentleman, indeed papa!

[*Takes Frankly's band.*]

Sir Gilb. 'D'ye hear! d'ye hear!' what a sensible assurance the slut has! Ah! it's a wheedling toad! [*Aside.*] Adod! I'll have a little more of her——but do you know, lady, that Mr. Witling has demanded my consent, and that it will cost me above twenty thousand pounds to refuse it?

Char. Yes, Sir, I do know it; and if I were to give him my consent, I know that I should have much the worst bargain of the two.

Sir Gilb. Your consent! Why sure, Madam, when I say, do so, do you pretend to have a will of your own?

Char. Umh! a little! a small pulse, you know, papa.

[*Fawning on Sir Gilb.*]

Sir Gilb. Ah, the coaxing gipsy! why, you confident, abominable——Odheart! I could kiss her——

Fran. Faith, do, Sir; that's no breach of your contract.

Sir Gilb. No! no! that's not fair neither; I am to be angry with her——besides I don't keep my word, if I don't speak a good one for him.

Char. That's not in your power, Sir; 'tis impossible any body can give him a good word, at least to me.

Sir Gilb. How! how! will not a handsome young fellow, with an hundred thousand pounds in his pocket, go down with you? Will not a full plumb melt in your mouth, mistress Dainty?

Char. Thank you, Sir; but I don't love trash!

Sir Gilb. Trash! Mr. Witling trash!

Char. A coxcomb.

Sir Gilb. I say he is——

Char. My aversion.

Sir Gilb. Bear witness, Mr. Frankly, she refuses him; you see all I say signifies nothing: but I say again and again; that I am resolved, Madam, you shall marry him, and that articles shall be drawn this very morning.

Char. But do you think you can't persuade him to stay a little, Sir?

Sir Gilb. Stay! yes; yes; a reasonable time, that is.

Char.

Char. You'll think it a reasonable one, I am sure, Sir,
Sir Gilb. Well ! well ! how long ?

Char. Only till I have done hating him, that's all.

Sir Gilb. Pshaw ! fiddle faddle ! Marry him first, and you'll have time enough to hate him afterwards.

Char. Well, Sir, then I have but one favour to beg of you——

Sir Gilb. Come, what is't, what is't ?

Char. Only, Sir, that in the draught of the articles, you will be pleased to leave a blank for the gentleman's name ; and if I don't fill it up to your mind, say I know nothing of my own.

Sir Gilb. Fy ! fy ! you wicked thing you——Mr. Frankly, it will do ! it will do ! the girl has all her goings ! keep her right, keep her right, and tight ; and I'll warrant thee all safe, boy.

Fran. Never fear, Sir——now there's but one difficulty behind ; were it but possible to make my lady our friend in this matter——

Sir Gilb. Pshaw ! waw ! never mind her ; am not I master of my own family ? Does she not know that my will's a law ? and if I once say the word——

Fran. That's true, Sir ; ' but you know, one would ' not make her a needless enemy : ' she'll think herself affronted, take it as an insult to her understanding, not to be let into the secret at all.

Char. Indeed, Sir, I am afraid we shall have a foul house, if she is not consulted in the business.

Sir Gilb. Nay, nay, with all my heart, but the foolish woman alway loves to dispute about nothing ; and such a spirit of contradiction runs away with her, I had as lief sit in the stocks as talk to her ; however, for your private satisfaction——

Fran. Indeed, Sir, I think it will be better so.

Sir Gilb. Well, well, then I'll tell her my resolution instantly.

Char. Ah, poor papa ! What a wicked distress have we brought him to ! Now will he rather run upon the mouth of a cannon, than let us see he is afraid of gunpowder.

Fran. How my lady will bounce when he mentions it.

[*Aside.*

Sir Gilb. Oh, here's my Lady ; I'll speak to her now.

Fran. If you please, we'll retire, that you may have no interruption.

Sir Gilb. Do so, you're right. [*Exeunt Fran. and Char. Enter Lady Wrangle, driving a Maid Servant in before her.*]

L. Wrang. Out of my doors, you dunce! you illiterate monster! What! could you not read? Could not you spell? Where were your eyes, you brainless idiot?

Sir Gilb. Hey-day! hey-day! What's the matter now?

L. Wrang. Go, you eleventh plague of Egypt.

Maid. Indeed, Madam, I did not know it was of any use, it was so blotted and blurred, I took it for waste paper.

L. Wrang. Blurred! you driveler! Was ever any piece perfect, that had not corrections, rasures, interlineations, and improvements? Does not the very original shew, that when the mind is warmest, it is never satisfied with its words?

Incipit, & dubitat; scribit, damnatque tabellas,

Et notat, & delet; mutat, culpatque probatque.

Sir Gilb. Oh, Lord! Now the learned fit's upon her, the devil won't be able to deal with her. [*Aside.*]

L. Wrang. What have you done with it, you dolt-head? Where is it? Fetch it; let me see it, I say.

Sir Gilb. Pray, my Lady Wrangle, what is all this rout about?

L. Wrang. Oh, nothing, to be sure! I am all always unreasonable.

Sir Gilb. Why, look you now, did I say any such thing?

L. Wrang. I don't care if you did.

Sir Gilb. It's very hard a man may not ask a civil question in his own house.

L. Wrang. Ay, do, side with her, take her part; do, do, uphold her in her impudence.

Sir Gilb. Why, my Lady, did I say a word to her?

L. Wrang. Pray, Mr. Wrangle, give me leave to govern my own servants. Don't you know, when I am out of temper, I won't be talk'd to?

Sir Gilb. *Very true, my Lady.*

L. Wrang. Have not I plague enough here, do you think?

Sir Gilb. Why ay, that's true too—Why, you confident jade! how dare you put my lady into such a violent passion?

Maid. Indeed, Sir, I don't know, not I. [*Whimpering.*]
L. Wrang.

L. Wrang. Pray, Mr. Wrangle, meddle with your own business; the fault's to me, and sure I am old enough to correct her myself.

Sir Gilb. Why, what a dickens, may'nt I be of your mind neither? 'Sheart! I can't be in the wrong on both sides.

L. Wrang. I don't know any business you have on either side.

Sir Gilb. Nay, if a man must not speak at all, it's another case.

L. Wrang. Lord! you are strangely teizing—well, come speak—what, what, what is't you would say now?

Sir Gilb. Nay, nothing, not I; I only asked what's the matter?

L. Wrang. I can't tell you, the provocation's too great for words.

Sir Gilb. Well, well, well.

L. Wrang. What here still? Am I to have no account of it then? What have you done with it, you monster?

Maid. Madam, the cook took it out of my hand, as I was coming down stairs with it; he said he wanted it.

L. Wrang. The cook! run, fly, and bid the villain send it me this moment. [Exit Maid.]

Sir Gilb. Why, what the dickins! the senseless jade has not given him a Flanders' lac'd head to boil his cabbage in, has she?

L. Wrang. Pshaw! Do you ever see me concern'd for such trifles?

Sir Gilb. Or has she let the rascal singe his fowls with a bank bill?

L. Wrang. If she had, do you think I would give myself such pain about either?

Sir Gilb. Hah! this must be some abominable thing indeed then.

L. Wrang. The loss, for ought I know, may be irreparable.

Sir Gilb. Oh! then she has lost your diamond necklace, I suppose.

L. Wrang. Pray don't plague me; 'tis impossible to express the wickedness of it.

Sir Gilb. What, the devil! the cook has not got the slut with child, has he?

L. Wrang. Worse ! worse a thousand times !

Sir Gilb. Worse ! What than playing the whore, or thief ? Then the jade has certainly committed murder.

L. Wrang. The most barbarous that ever was —

Sir Gilb. Hoh ! then she has broke pug's neck, to be sure. [*Aside.*

L. Wrang. The changeling innocent has given that savage beast, the cook, my whole new translation of the passion of Byblis, for waste paper, to be torn or tortur'd to a thousand fordid uses.

Sir Gilb. Nay then —

L. Wrang. And I have not another copy in the world, if it were to save mankind from extirpation.

Sir Gilb. I'm glad on't, with all my heart ; now could I laugh, if I durst, most immoderately. [*Aside.*

L. Wrang. Now, mistress, have you brought it ?

[*Re-enter Maid.*

Maid. Madam, the cook says, he has skewer'd it on to the roast-beef, and he can't take it off : he won't burn his meat for nobody, not he, he says.

L. Wrang. Here ! call the footman. He won't ! Bid them drag the rascal hither by the ears, or I'll have them nailed down to the dresser for his impudence—I'll turn the villain out of my house this moment.

[*Exit Maid.*

Sir Gilb. Come, come, my Lady, don't be in a heat about a trifle ; I am glad to find it's no worse.

L. Wrang. Worse ! had he robb'd the house, and after fired it, I could sooner have forgiven him.

Sir Gilb. Hah ! thank you for that, Madam ; but I should not.

L. Wrang. You ! you should not ! What would be your injury compared with mine ? What I'm concern'd for, the whole learned world, even to posterity, may feel the loss of.

Sir Gilb. Well, well ; have a little patience ; may be she may get it again. And now you talk of posterity, my lady Wrangle, I have some thoughts of marrying my daughter Charlotte ; as for Sophronia, you know —

L. Wrang. I know, that one won't, and t'other shan't marry ; she is a pert forward thing, and has disobligh'd me, and therefore I'll punish her as I think fit. I desire
you

you won't name her to me, you see I have other things in my head—all greas'd, and burnt to ashes, I suppose.

Sir Gibb. I had better talk to her another time, I believe.

Enter the Maid with the Cook.

L. Wrang. Oh! are you come at last, Sir? Pray, how durst you send me such an impudent answer?

Cook. I did not send an impudent answer, Madam; I only said the meat would be spoil'd: but here she comes, and makes a noise, and a rout, and a clatter about nothing at all—and so every impertinent jade here takes upon her—Oons! a man can't do his business in quiet for them.

L. Wrang. Hold your nonsensical tongue, Sir, and give me the paper I sent for.

Cook. Paper! This is what she gave me.

[Holds it on a skewer, all greasy.]

L. Wrong. Oh my heavens! what a spectacle! not one line legible, though an empire were to purchase it. Look, look, look, you monster!

[Holding him.]

Sir Gibb. So! here will be rare doings.

Cook. Oons! what a life's here about a piece of foul paper?

L. Wrang. A life, you villain! your whole life can't make amends for what you have done. I'll have you beat out of this house, till every bone in your body is broken for this, firrah.

Cook. Beat, Madam! Blood! I won't be beat. I did not come here for that: I'll be out of your house presently; I'll see who will break my bones then; and so there's one of your napkins, Madam: as for your sheet of paper, there's a half-penny for't; and now take your course. I know how to get my wages, I'll warrant you—There's a law for servants as well as other people.

[Exit Cook.]

Sir Gibb. Go, go, mind your business, you silly Tom Ladle you.

L. Wrong. Ay; this is always the effect of your indulgence; no wonder I have no power over them. If you had the least grain of spirit, you would have broke the rascal's head for me.

Sir Gibb. Pfhah! there's no occasion for it—let's see, let's

let's see! [*Takes up the paper.*] Come, come, this matter may be made up without bloodshed still—ay, here; umh! umh!—by the way, I believe this beef's enough, it smells bravely of the gravy.

L. Wrang. What! then I am your jest, it seems.

Sir Gilb. Pooh! pry'thee be quiet; I tell you, I am serious—ay, it's plain to be read still. [*Reads.*]

All a poor maid could do (the gods, I'm sure,

Can tell) I've suffer'd to compleat my cure—Cure!

Ah, poor soul — got the foul disease, I suppose.

L. Wrang. Your obscene comment, Mr. Wrangle, is more provoking than the insolence of your servants: but I must tell you, Sir, I will never eat or sleep in your house more, if that rascal is not turned out of it this moment.

Maid. I hope your Ladyship is not in earnest, Madam.

L. Wrang. What do you prate, Mrs. Minx?

Maid. Indeed, Madam, if John's to be turn'd away, I shan't stay in the family: for though he is sometimes a little hasty to a body, yet I have reason to know he is an honest-hearted man in the main; and I have too much kindness for him to stay in any service, where he is to be abus'd.

L. Wrang. What, you are in love with him, Mrs. Trollop, are you? [*Cuffs her.*]

Maid. Ods my life! Madam, I won't be struck by no body: and if I do love him, what's that to any body? and I don't know why poor folks mayn't be in love as well their betters.

Sir Gilb. Come, come, hold your tongue, huffy.

Maid. Sir, I can't hold my tongue; though I can't say but your worship's a very kind master: but as for my Lady, the devil would not live with her; and so, Madam, I desire you will provide yourself. [*Flings off.*]

Sir Gilb. Odzines, Madam, at this rate I shall have neither dinner to eat, nor bed to lie on. What servants will bear this life, do you think? You have no more temper than a——Why how should a silly wench know what your impertinent poetry was good for?

L. Wrang. Impertinent! I'd have you know, Mr. Ignorant, there's not a line in the whole, that has not the true Attic salt in it.

Sir

THE REFUSAL.

57

Sir Gibb. Well, and now there's English salt in it; and I think the relish of one's as good as t'other.

L. Wrang. Mr. Wrangle, if you have no sense of the soul's diviner faculties, know, I have, and can resent these vulgar insults. You shall find, Sir, that a superior understanding has a proportion'd spirit to support its dignity. Let me have instant reparation, or, by my injured genius, I'll set you house and family in a blaze.

[*Exit L. Wrang.*

Sir Gibb. Why then blaze and burn by yourself; for I'll go out of the house. [Going.

Enter Frankly and Charlotte.

Fran. Have you seen my Lady, Sir?

Sir Gibb. Yes, yes, I have seen her—but—I don't know—she—she—

Fran. Don't come into it, I suppose.

Sir Gibb. Umh! no, not readily—in short, the house is all untitled.

Char. Lord, Sir! what filthy thing's this?

[*Seeing the Paper.*

Sir Gibb. Ay, there's the business—a brat of my Lady's brain, that has got a mischance: that's all.

Fran. Some roasted poetry, I presume.

Sir Gibb. Ay, ay; the, the, the passion of Bibble Babble; I don't know what she calls it: but she has been in such a fume here, that half the servants are going to leave the house about it. Charlotte, you can wheedle upon occasion; pry'thee step into the hall, and see if you can make up this matter among them.

Char. I'll do my best, Sir.

[*Exit Char.*

Fran. Poor Lady! she is a little apt to be over-concerned for her poetry.

Sir Gibb. Concern'd! Odsblews! if a line on't happens to be mislaid, she's as mad as a blind mare that has lost her foal; she'll run her head against a stone-wall to recover it. All the use I find of her learning is, that it furnishes her with more words to scold with.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Sir, Mr. Grainger's come, and Mr. Witling.

Sir Gibb. Oh, that's well. Come, Mr. Frankly, let's all go into the dining-room together; mayhap she may be asham'd to be in a passion before company.

Fran.

Fran. At least we may keep her within bounds, Sir.

Sir Gill. You're right! you're right! Ah! its a very hard case! there's no condition of life without plague and trouble——Why, most people think now I have fortune enough to make ten men of quality happy——

And yet you see how odly things are carried;

'Tis true, I'm worth a million, but I'm married.

[*Exeunt.*]

A C T IV.

Granger and Frankly.

FRANKLY.

IN one word, Granger, thou art a very dangerous fellow; 'I did not believe it possible thy blunt humour could have concealed so exquisite a flatterer:' why thou art more in my lady's favour in half an hour, than all my art could make me in half a year.

Gran. Have I not always told you, Frankly, that one civil thing from a downright dealer, goes farther than a thousand from a man of general complaisance? 'How do you think I first gain'd credit with Sophronia? Not (as you expected to do it) by an implicit admiration; but the contrary, insolently laughing at her pretending to principles, which I would not allow her capable to comprehend or practise. Now this naturally piqued her into an impatience to mend my opinion of her; so the more difficult I seemed to be convinced of her virtues, the more easy I made it to mend her opinion of me.'

Fran. And if thou hast not done it effectually, I know nothing of the sex: why, she blush'd, man, like a damask rose; when you first came into the room.

Gran. Did not I tell you too, her quarrel and spleen to you would be of service to me?

Fran. O! palpably! I was ready to burst to see her bridle, and smile at me, upon your growing particular to her.

Gran. And what pains she took, to make you observe, that she overlooked you? ha! ha!

Fran. Yes, I did observe, indeed, that the whole
'dinner-

‘ dinner-time she was never two minutes without stealing a glance at you.

‘ *Gran.* O blefs me ! I can’t bear the insolence of my own imagination ! What a dear confufion will she feel ? What a vermilion fhame will fpread through all that lovely form——if ever her flefh and blood fhould happen to mutiny ?

‘ *Fran.* Which, to tell you the truth, I think it does already.’

Gran. But the misfortune is, I have flatter’d my lady into fo good a humour, by engaging to make out a fair copy of her basted verfes there, that I doubt, she won’t be able to leave me alone with Sophronia.

Fran. Never fear ; her malice is too bufy, in fetting Witling againft me, to interrupt you.

Gran. There, indeed, I have fome hopes.

Fran. I believe I fhall be able to affift them, and in part to return the favour you have done me with Sir Gilbert.

Gran. Any thing in my power you may be fure of——but fee, he’s here !

Enter Sir Gilbert.

Sir Gilb. O ! your fervant, gentlemen ; I thought we had loft you.

Gran. Your pardon, Sir, we had only a word or two in private,

Fran. We were juft coming into the company.

Sir Gilb. In troth, I can tell you, the fooner the better : for there’s my lady and Charlotte are going to play all the game upon us.

Fran. Never fear, Sir ; as long as you have given me leave to go Charlotte’s halves, she’ll make the moft of her cards, I’ll warrant you.

Sir Gilb. I don’t know that, but I am fure Witling yonder is making the moft of his time : his wit, or his impudence have got him into fuch high favour with my lady, that she is railing at you like a fury, and crying him up for an angel : in fhort, Charlotte has difcovered all your affair with her, and has plainly told him you are his rival. But it feems, Sir, your pretenfions are fo ridiculous, that they are all three cracking their fides in a full chorus of laughing at you.

Fran. Sir, I am obliged to you for your concern ; but in all this, Charlotte is acting no wrong part, I can assure you.

Sir Gilb. No wrong part ! Odsheart ! I tell you she's coquetting to him, with every wicked limb about her—and is as full of her airs there, as a handsome widow to a young lord in the Lobby, when she has a suit depending in the House of Peers.

Fran. Better still, the more likely to carry her cause, Sir.

Sir Gilb. Carry her cause ! carry her coxcomb, Sir ; for, you'll see, that will be the end on't : she'll be carry'd off herself, Sir. Why, man, he is going to be-leaguer her with a whole army of fidlers yonder ; ' there are fix coach loads of them now at the door, all stow'd fore and aft, with nothing but cases of instruments : ' Such a concourse of cat-guts, you'd swear one of their squalling eunuchs were roasting alive here.

Fran. Believe me, Sir, there is no terror in all this preparation ; ' for since you are pleased to think Mr. Granger's security and mine sufficient against any damage you can suffer from your contract with Witling, ' do you but stand it out stoutly with my lady, and I'll engage to dismount his musical battery with a child's whistle.

Sir Gilb. My lady ! Pshaw waw ? What dost thou talk of her, man ? Why I tell you, I'll put her into a mouse-hole, provided you engage to bring me off with Witling.

Fran. Your security shall be signed the minute it can be drawn, Sir.

Sir Gilb. That's enough ; ' I have ordered my lawyer to send his clerk with it, before he brings the deed of consent that I am to sign to Witling, : ' but give me leave to tell you again, gentlemen, I really don't understand the girl's way of proceeding all this while.

Fran. Why, Sir——don't you know that Witling is the vainest togue upon earth.

Sir Gilb. I grant it.

Fran. And consequently, that the pride of outwitting you in your daughter, gives him more pleasure than either her person or her portion ?

Sir Gilb. Not unlikely.

Fran.

'*Fran.* And can you think, that from the same natural insolence, he would not rather seem to owe his triumph over a rival too, rather to his own merit, than any accident of fortune ?

'*Sir Gilb.* I grant you that too.'

Fran. Why, Sir, then, if Charlotte were to despise him, we are sure he would then insist upon his bargain ; but while she flatters him, and you and I only laugh at him, he may be vain enough to trust his triumph to her choice and inclination only.

Sir Gilb. O ! now I begin to take you : so that, if he is rightly handled among us, you propose that Charlotte will be able to coquette him out of his contract.

Fran. Nay, it's her own project, Sir : and I cannot really think we have an ill chance for it at worst : but we must leave it all to her now. In love affairs, you know, Sir, women have generally wiser heads than we.

Sir Gilb. Troth ! I don't wholly dislike it ; and if I don't handle him roundly on my part—

Gran. Hush ! my lady—

Fran. Anon I'll tell tell you more, Sir.

Enter Lady Wrangle and Sophronia.

L. Wrang. Well, Sophronia, since I see this giddy girl is neither to be formed by precept or example ; it is at least some consolation, to find her natural inconstancy so effectually mortifies that vile apostate, Frankly.

Soph. Yet I am amazed he should not be more moved at her infidelity.

L. Wrang. You know he's vain, and thinks his merit may sleep in full security. But now ! to rouse him from his dream—Oh, Mr. Granger ! I am sorry you left us ; I am perfectly killed with laughing ! There's Mr. Witling has had such infinite humour ! He has entertain'd as more than ten comedies.

Gran. O ! Pray, Madam, let us go in and participate.

L. Wrang. By no means ; he's now alone with his mistress, and 'twould be barbarous to interrupt them.

Gran. His mistress, Madam !

L. Wrang. Ay ! with Charlotte ; and, you know, lovers so near their happiness are apt to like no company so well as their own.

Fran. D'ye hear, Sir? [To *Sir Gilb.* apart.

Sir Gilb. I told you how it was. [To *Fran.* apart.

L. Wrang. Beside, he is to give us a little music; and I think this room will be more convenient.

Gran. He is a fortunate man indeed, Madam, to be so well with the young lady already.

L. Wrang. There's no accounting for that idle passion in uncultivated minds: I am not surpris'd at her forwardness, considering the vulgar education Mr. Wrangle has given her.

Sir Gilb. Odsheart, Madam! don't disparage my girl: she has had a more useful education than your ladyship.

L. Wrang. O! no doubt! she has shewn most hopeful effects on it, indeed! by hanging upon every young fellow's neck, that does but ask her the question.

Fran. Whatever faults Charlotte may have, Madam, I never knew her take pleasure in exposing those of other people.

L. Wrang. O! cry you mercy, Sir; you have great reason to defend her, I don't question: she is a saint in your eye, to be sure.

Fran. Were she weak enough to imagine a superficial learning could make her one, 'tis possible, her failings then, like other people's, might have been more conspicuous.

L. Wrang. What do you mean, Sir?

Fran. I mean, Madam, that as she does not read Aristotle, Plato, Plutarch, or Seneca, she is neither romantic or vain of her pedantry; and as her learning never went higher than Bickerstaff's Tatlers, her manners are consequently natural, modest, and agreeable.

Sir Gilb. Ah! well said Frankly. [Aside.

L. Wrang. Since I am told you were once in love with her, I shall say no more, but leave her own immediate behaviour to confirm your good opinion of her virtues. Ha, ha! [Exit.

Gran. While the lovers of this age, Madam, have so deprav'd a taste, we must not wonder, if our modern fine ladies are apt to run into coquetry: they are now forced to it in their defence; if they don't make advances, they stand as lonely and useless as untenanted houses: so that coquetry, it seems, is no more than setting

‘ setting a bill upon their door, that lovers in distress
 ‘ may read as they pass—Here are night’s lodgings to
 ‘ be let.

‘ *L. Wrang.* O! they are most hospitable dames indeed: after this, methinks, the more proper appellation for coquets should be that of landladies.

[*A servant whispers* *L. Wrang.*

‘ I’ll come and give orders myself. [*Exit.*

‘ *Soph.* I don’t know any man alive, that looks upon the degeneracy of mankind with so discerning an eye as Mr. Granger; but I am afraid it will therefore draw him into my misfortune, of being as odious to the illiterate of his sex, as I am to those of mine.

‘ *Gran.* If that were as just a reason, Madam, for your having a favourable opinion of me, as it is for my perfect admiration of you, we should each of us have still as many friends as any wise man or woman ought to desire.

Fran. Do you mind that, Sir? [*Apart.*

Sir Gibb. A sly rogue! he knows how to tickle her up, I see. [*Apart.*

Soph. And yet the rude world will say, perhaps, that our mutual enmity to them has reduced us to a friendship for one another.

Gran. That’s a reproach can never reach you, Madam: so much beauty cannot but have its choice of friends and admirers: a form so bright and perfect, like a comet in the hemisphere, where’er it comes, must set mankind a gazing.

Soph. Fye! Mr. Granger!

Sir Gibb. What, a dickens! will she swallow that blazing star now? [*Apart.*

Fran. Ay, as he has dress’d it, and drink after it too, Sir. [*Apart.*

‘ *Soph.* I mind not multitudes.

‘ *Gran.* Pardon me, I know you have a soul above them; and I really think it the misfortune of your person, to have been so exquisitely fair, that where your virtue would preserve, your eyes destroy; they give involuntary love; where’er you pass, in spite of all your innocence, they wound—*Juvenumque prodis publica cura.*

‘ *Soph.* Alas! my eyes are turn’d upon myself: ‘and so
 ‘ little do I mind the follies of other people, that I some-

‘ times find myself alone in the midst of a public circle.

‘ *Gran.* I cannot wonder at that, Madam, since our best assemblies are generally made up of illiterate beings, that when they are alone, find themselves in the worst company, and so are reduced to come abroad, though merely to meet, and hate one another.’

Soph. What charms, then, can you suppose I could have for a world, that has so few for me? Beside, at most, the men of modern gallantry gaze upon a woman of real virtue, only as atheists look into a fine church, from curiosity, not devotion: ‘ they may admire its ornaments and architecture; but have neither grace nor faith for farther adoration.’

Gran. All men are not infidels; of me, at least, you have a convert: and tho’ the sensual practice of the world had made me long despair of such perfection in a mortal mold; yet when the rays of truth celestial broke in upon my sense, my conscious heart at once confess’d the deity; I prostrate fell a proselyte to virtue; and now its chaste desires enlarge my soul, and raise me to seraphic joy.

Soph. Harmonious sounds, celestial transports! [*Aside.*

Sir Gilb. Oh, dear! Oh, dear! was ever such a wicked thief? Odsheart, he’ll make her go to prayers with him, presently! [*Aside.*

Soph. No more; we are observed. These heaven-born emanations of the soul desire not vulgar ears. Some fitter time may offer—till when——

Gran. Till then, be hush’d our joys.

[*Gran. leaves her, and joins the men, while Soph. walks apart, musing.*

Soph. Our joys, indeed! Such was, in Paradise, our first parents joy, before they fell from innocence to shame.

Fran. [To *Gran.*] Why did you not go on with her? We thought you were in a fine way. Sir Gilbert and I were just going to steal off.

Gran. Soft and fair, Sir. A lady of her delicacy must be carried, like a taper new-lighted, gently forward; if you hurry her, out she goes.

Sir Gilb. You’re right, you’re right. Now you shall see me manage her a little: I’ll speak a good word for you—
—a-hum—

Gran.

Gran. Hush ! not for the world, Sir——Death, you'll spoil all ! Don't you see she is in contemplation ?

Sir Gilb. What if she be, man ? We must not humour her till she is stark mad, neither. Sophronia, how dost thou do, child ?

Soph. [*Repeating.*]———The earth
Gave sign of gratulation, and each hill :
Joyous the birds ; fresh gales and gentle airs
Whisper'd it to the woods, and from their wings
Flung rose, flung odours, from the juicy shrub
Disporting———

Sir Gilb. Very pretty, I protest ; very pretty. These amorous scraps of fancy in thy head, make me hope that love is not far from thy heart, Sophy.

Soph. Love, Sir, was ever in my heart ; but such a love, as the blind Homer of this British isle, in rhymeless harmony, sublimely sings———

Sir Gilb. Well, and, pr'ythee, what does he say of it ?

Soph.———Love refines
The thought, and heart enlarges ; has his seat
In reason, and is judicious, is the scale,
By which to heavenly love thou mayst ascend.

Sir Gilb. Very good again ; and troth, I'm glad to hear thou art so heartily reconciled to it.

Soph. Easier than air with air, if spirits embrace,
Total they mix, union of pure with pure
Desiring———

Sir Gilb. Ah ! there, I doubt, we are a little crazy.

[*Aside.*]

Soph. This iron age, so fraudulent and bold,
Touch'd with this love, would be an age of gold.

Sir Gilb. Oh, lud ! Oh, lud ! this will never do. [*Aside.*]

Gran. So, she has given the old gentleman his belly-full, I see. Well, Sir, how do you find her ?

Sir Gilb. Ah, poor soul, piteous bad ! all upon the tativity again ! You must e'en undertake her yourself ; for I can do no good upon her. But here comes love of another kind.

Enter Charlotte, Witling, and Lady Wrangle.

Char. Oh, sister ! here's Mr. Witling has writ the prettiest cantata, sure, that ever made music enchanting.

Soph. I am glad, sister, you are reconciled to any of his performances.

Wit. Oh, fie! Madam, she only rallies—A mere trifle.

Fran. That I dare swear it is.

Wit. Ha, ha! no doubt on't; if you could like it, it must be an extraordinary piece, indeed, Tom. You see, my little rogue, we have crabbed him already.

[*Aside, to Char.*

L. Wrang. Mr. Frankly is a mere modern critic, that makes personal inclination the rule of his judgment; but to condemn what one never saw, is making short work, indeed.

Fran. With submission, Madam, I can see no great rashness in presuming that a magpye can't sing like a nightingale.

Wit. No, nor an owl look like a peacock, neither. Ha, ha!

L. Wrang. and Char. Ha, ha, ha!

L. Wrang. Perfectly pleasant.

Char. Oh, wit to an infinity!

Fran. Much good may do you with your Canary-bird, Madam.

[*To Char.*

Char. Oh, Sir, I am sorry you are exhausted! but when wit is upon the lee, no wonder it runs into rudeness.

Fran. I don't wonder at my not hitting your taste, Madam, when such stuff as this can go down with you.

Wit. My stuff, dear Tom, was composed purely for the entertainment of this lady; and since she likes it, I will allow, that you, of all mankind, have most reason to find fault with it. Ha, ha!

Char. Nay, if he should like it, even I will then give it up, to the world as good for nothing.

Fran. Then it's in danger, I can tell you, Madam; for I shall certainly like it; because I am sure it will be good for nothing.

Char. A pleasant paradox.

Fran. None at all, Madam; for since I find your heart is, like stock, to be transferred upon a bargain, it will be some pleasure, at least, to see the grossness of your choice revenge me on your infidelity.

Wit.

‘ *Wit.* Poor Tom ! What, are the grapes sour, my dear ? Ha, ha, ha !

‘ *Char.* Pshaw ! never mind him. The cantata, dear Mr. Witling, the cantata.

L. Wran. Oh, by all means ! ‘ Pray oblige us, Sir.

‘ *Wit.* Immediately, Madam ; but all things in order. First give me leave to regale the good company with a small crash of instrumental.

‘ *L. Wran.* As you please, Sir.

‘ *Wit.* Hey, Signor Carbonelli ! *Vi pace d'intrare !*

[*The music enter.*

‘ *L. Wran.* Mr. Granger, won't you please to sit ?

‘ *Sir Gilb.* Ay, ay, come, gentlemen ; but, in earnest, does this puppy really pretend to sing ?

‘ *Fran.* Much as he pretends to wit, Sir ; he can make a noise, at least.

‘ *Sir Gilb.* But the whelp has no voice.

‘ *Fran.* Oh, Sir, that's out of fashion ! Your best masters seldom have any.

‘ *Sir Gilb.* Then I would not give a fig for their music, Sir ; I would as lief see a cripple dance. But let's hear what the fiddles can do. [*They play a sonata.*]
‘ Well, and what, we are to suppose this is very fine, now, ha ?

Fran. No doubt on't, Sir ; at least it will not be safe to say the contrary.

‘ *Sir Gilb.* Well, well, for a quiet life, then, very fine let it be ; but I wish I could hear a Lancashire horn-pipe for all that.’

L. Wran. Come, dear Sir, no more apologies.

[*To Witling.*

Gran. See, Sir, Mr. Witling is going to entertain us.

Sir Gilb. Ay, that must be rare stuff indeed.

‘ *Wit.* Upon my life, Madam, I have no more voice than a kettle-drum ; beside, this is for a treble, and out of my compass.

‘ *Char.* Oh, no matter ? feign it, dear Mr. Witling.

‘ *Wit.* I would fain oblige you, Madam ; but yet, methinks, nothing done to please you should be feign'd, neither, Madam.

‘ *Fran.* Ha ! He would fain be witty, I see ; but don't trouble yourself, Madam ; he has as much mind to sing

‘ as you have to hear him: tho’, Heaven knows, his voice
 ‘ is like his modesty, utterly forced; nature has nothing
 ‘ to do with either of them.

‘ *Wit.* Whatever my modesty is, dear Tom, thy uneasiness I am sure is natural; that comes from thy heart,
 ‘ I dare answer for it. Ha, ha, ha!

‘ *Fran.* Oh, thou happy rogue!’

Wit. But, Madam, if I sing, you shall promise me to dance, then.

Char. Oh, any composition! I’ll do it with all my heart.

L. Wrang. But the words ‘ first, dear Sir, read them out.’

Wit. Well, ladies, since you will have it——

Sir Gilb. He is a cursed while about it, methinks——

Wit. You must know, then, this cantata is of a different species from the passion generally expressed in our modern operas; for there you see your lover usually approaches the fair lady with sighs, tears, torments, and dying. Now, here I shew you the way of making love like a pretty fellow; that is, like a man of sense, all life, and gaiety——
 As for example——

Char. Pray, mind.

Wit. [Reading.]

Thus to a pensive swain,
 Who long had lov’d in vain,
 Thyrsis, the secret arts
 Of gaining hearts
 From cold disdain,

To his despairing friend imparts:

So far recitative—Now for the air—A-hum, hum!

‘ *Soph.* Don’t you think, Mr. Granger, that the double dative cases of “to a pensive swain, to his despairing friend,” almost reduce this to nonsense?

‘ *Gran.* Justly observed, Madam; but, you know, nonsense and harmony are reconciled of late.’

Wit. Would you woo her

With success?

Up to her,

Pursue her

With life and address.

If gay,
Shew her play;
If colder,
Be bolder:

Now seize her,
And teize her,
And kifs her,
And please her;
Till ripe for the joy,
You warm her,
Alarm her,
Disarm her,
You charm her,
I warrant thee, boy.

Part II.

But to pine and languish,
Or sigh your anguish
To the air,
Is fruitless pain,
Endur'd in vain:

Silent woes, and looks of care,
Will never, never win the fair.

End with the first strain.

Ah, you little rogue!

[To Charlotte.

L. Wrang. Infinitely pretty! 'Nothing, sure, was ever
' so musical.

' *Char.* Sing it, sing it, dear Mr. Witling. I am on
' tiptoe to hear it.

' *Wit.* Well, Madam, if you can bear it in a falsetto.
[He sings.

' *Char.* O caro! caro!

' *Wit.* Anima mia——

Soph. [To Gran.] How happy are the self-conceited!
' and yet, if he had not sung, now, this wretch's folly
' and ignorance had been less conspicuous.

' *Gran.* Right, Madam; but, you know, a man must
' have variety of parts, to make an accomplished cox-
' comb.

' *Soph.*

' *Soph.* I scarce think poetry is more abused than music, by its vain pretenders.

' *Gran.* And yet it is hard to say, Madam, whether those pretenders, or the false taste of our modern admirers, have more contributed to the abuse of either.'

Wit. But come, Madam, now your promise; 'your airs only' [*To Char.*] can give a *bonne bouche* to our entertainment.

Char. Well, since I gave my word, I'll use no ceremony.

Soph. 'What, more folly?' I grow tired. Shall we walk into my library? There we may raise our thoughts.

Gran. You charm me, Madam; I thirst, methinks, for a clear draught of Helicon.

Soph. Take no leave, but follow me. [*Ex. Soph. & Gr.*]

Wit. '*E ben sonate.*' [*Charlotte dances.*] '*Eb! viva! viva!*' All enchantment, Madam! no ten thousand angels ever came up to it.

L. Wrang. It cannot be denied but Charlotte has an external genius; she wants no personal accomplishments; but 'tis great pity the application they have cost her, was not laid out upon the improvement of her understanding.

Wit. Oh, pardon me, Madam! as long as there is a good understanding between her and me, what matter's which of us has it, you know.

Sir Gilb. Ay, but there's the question, which of you 'tis that has it; for if one of you has it, I am sure you two will never come together.

Fran. Well said! at him, Sir. [*Aside.*]

Wit. Look you, Sir Gilbert; you may fancy your fair daughter and I are a couple of fools, if you please; but if one of us had not been wiser than the father, we could never have had a right to come together, in spite of his teeth, that's certain. Ha, ha, ha!

L. Wrang. Pardon me, Mr. Witling, you under-rate your merit; for you had been sure of my consent without your contract.

Wit. Ay, Madam, that was only a foolish modesty that I could not shake off; therefore I hope you will excuse me, if durst not think merit alone was a sufficient bait to bob Sir Gilbert out of his consent. Ha, ha, ha!

Sir Gilb. You are a very merry grig, Sir; but have a care you are not bobb'd yourself. Stay till you win, before you laugh; for you are not yet married, I presume.

Wit.

Wit. Why no, nor you have not supped yet; yet I hold gold to silver, we both eat before we sleep.

Sir Gilb. Why! dost thou think the girl is in haste to marry thee to night!

Wit. I don't say that neither: but, Sir, as long as I have a sufficient deposit of the lady's inclinations, to answer for the rest of her premises, you will give me leave not to be afraid of her looking out for a new chap in the mean time, Sir.

Sir Gilb. A deposit! why wouldst thou persuade me the girl can be fool enough to like thee?

Wit. 'Egad, I don't know how it is, but she has wit enough, it seems, to make me think so—but if you won't take my word, let her answer for herself.

Sir Gilb. Ay, that I would be glad to hear.

Wit. Ha, ha! 'Egad, this is a pleasant question indeed—Madam, are not you willing, (as soon as the church-books can be open) to make a transfer of your whole stock of beauty for the conjugal uses of your humble servant?

Char. Indeed, papa, I won't suppose that can be a question.

Wit. A hum! your humble servant, Sir.

Char. Beside, are not you obliged to sign a further deed of consent to Mr. Witling?

Sir Gilb. Yes, child; but the same deed reserves to you a right of refusal, as well as to him.

Char. That I understand, Sir; and there's one can witness for whom I have reserved that right of refusal.

[*Pointing to Fran.*

Wit. Your humble servant, again, Sir; ha, ha, ha!

L. Wrang. I am amazed, Mr. Wrangle, you could think she could be under the least difficulty in the choice.

Fran. And yet, Madam, there are very innocent ladies, that have made a difficulty of changing their inclinations in half an hour.

L. Wrang. A woman of strict virtue, Sir, ought to have no inclinations at all: or, if any, those only of being obedient to the will of her parents.

Wit. Oh, let him alone, Madam; the more he rails, the more I shall laugh, depend upon't: the pain of a rival is the pleasanter game in the world: his wishing me at the devil, is just the same thing as if he wished me joy! ha, ha, ha!

Sir Gibb. Well, Sir, all I shall say, is, that if the girl has common sense, thy contract must still be good for nothing.

Wit. Right! and if you had common sense, I am sure you would never have made it; not but to do you justice, Sir Gilbert, I must own you have wit in your way too, though it's of a very odd turn, I grant you.

Sir Gibb. Sir, I disown my pretensions to any, if ever you had sense enough to find it out.

Wit. Sure you forget, my dear Sir Gilbert. Don't you remember once I did find it out? Did not I slyly catch you in St. What-de-callum's churchyard, with your table book, taking dead people's names from the tomb-stones, to fill up your list of your third subscription, that you might be sure of those that would never come to claim it? and then pretended to all your friends you were full? There, at least, you had more wit to keep people out, than any man living had to get in: for I grant you, your list was dead sure! ha, ha, ha!

Sir Gibb. Why, ay, this nonsensical story now passes for wit, I warrant, among your cockade and velvet sparks at Garraway's; but much good may do you with your jest, as long as we have your money among us: I believe it will be no hard matter to bite most of your soft heads off before it be long; and if you drive on as you seem to do, we shall make bold to set some of you down where we took you up, oddsheart-likins.

Wit. Nay, I grant you, to do your own business, you must do other peoples too; but if all the young fellows of dress and pleasure would follow me, I would undertake to lead you a dance for all that.

Sir Gibb. And, pray, what would you have them do!

Wit. Why, do as you do: nothing that you pretend to do; or do as I did, every thing as you whispered me not to do. I minded what your broker did, not what you said, my dear! And if every gentleman would but buy, when you advise him to sell; or sell when you advise him to buy, 'twould be impossible to go out of the way: why, 'tis as plain road, man, as from Hyde-Park corner to Kensington.'

Sir Gibb. Sir, you take a great deal of liberty with me; infomuch, that I must tell you, I am not sure I won't pay the forfeit of my contract, rather than part with my daughter to a coxcomb—and so take it as you will.

L. Wrang. Mr. Wrangle! what do you mean by this brutality?

Fran. Mr. Witling, Madam, will take nothing ill, that I think fit to justify, I am sure.

Wit. No, faith! you need not fear it; I'll marry before I'll fight, depend upon't. Ha, ha!

L. Wrang. Mr. Witling, I beg you come away this moment—I'll undertake to do your merit justice. I'll see who dares pretend to govern in this family beside myself. Charlotte, give him your hand—Come, Sir—

[*Exit Lady Wrangle.*]

Wit. I am all obedience, Madam—your humble servant, Mr. Frankly——“Would you woo her——”

[*Exit, singing with Charlotte.*]

Fran. Admirably well done, Sir! ‘you have worked his insolence to rare order.’ Now, if you can but stand it out as stoutly with my lady, our business is done.

Sir Gibb. If!—Will you stand by me?

Fran. Will you give me your authority, Sir, to handle her roundly, and make her know who ought to be her master?

Sir Gibb. My authority! ay, and thanks into the bargain—Come along, I'll send for the lawyer now—Mr. Frankly, my blood rises at her; she shall find I'll vindicate the honour of the city, and, from this moment, demolish her petticoat government.

Fran. Well said; I'll warrant you, Sir. [*Exeunt.*]

END of the FOURTH ACT.

A C T V.

Sir Gilbert and Frankly.

SIR GILBERT.

MY dear Frankly, I could not rest till I had thee alone again; thou hast gained upon me for ever: your vindicating the husband's authority, and taking my

G

wife

wife a peg lower before my face, has tickled my fancy to that degree, that, odzooks ! I could wish in my heart thou hadst been married to her.

Fran. Oh, I should be loth to have robbed you, Sir, of that happiness.

Sir Gilb. A hum ! you are right, you are right ; I did not think of that indeed. Well ; it's a very odd thing now, that a wife will sooner be kept under by any man than her husband : why the deuce can't I govern her so ?

Fran. There's no great secret in the matter, Sir ; for take any couple in Christendom, you will certainly find, that the more troublesome of the two is always head of the family.

Sir Gilb. By my troth, I believe you are right ; and since the war is begun, I'll make a fair push for't. I am resolved now to thwart her in every thing ; and if Granger has but wit enough to talk Sophronia into her senses ; that is, if he can but convince her that she is flesh and blood, and born to breed, like other women ; odzooks ! he shall marry her immediately : I'll plague her Ladyship that way too.

Fran. That way ! Oh, ay, its true : for I think I have heard you say, Sir, that if either of your daughters die unmarried, my Lady is to inherit their fortunes.

Sir Gilb. Ay, ay ; there the shoe pinches, man ; she would be as much an enemy to Granger, as she is to you, if she could in the least suspect he would ever make any thing of it with Sophronia.

Fran. And, if I don't mistake, Sir, Granger is in a fair way there too ; for, to my knowledge, he has been locked up with her this half hour, here in her library.

Sir Gilb. The dickens !

Fran. Did not you observe them steal off together, just before the music ?

Sir Gilb. I wondered, indeed, what was become of them ; by the lord Harry I am glad of it—I must have a peep at them. [*Goes to the key-hole.*] Odso ! they are just a coming forth.

Fran. We had best be out of the way then, that we may not disturb them.

Sir Gilb. No, no, I'll warrant you : pr'ythee, let us stand ' behind this skreen,' and observe what passes.

Fran.

Fran. Quick! quickly then; here they come.

[*They retire.*]

Enter Granger with Sophronia.

Soph. Oh, Granger! still preserve this purity,

And my whole soul will open to receive thee:

Forget, like me, thy sex, how sweetly may

We pass our days in rational desire!

‘Thou seest, I own, without a blush, my love,

‘For blushes only rise from guilty flames;

‘When conscience driven, reluctant to the crime,

‘Leaps to the face, and marks the cheek with shame:

‘But the chaste heart sublim’d by purer fires,

‘Knowing no conscious fear, reserve, or guile,

‘Gives, with unbounded frankness, all its store,

‘And only blushes—that it gives no more.’

Gran. Hear this, ye bright immortal choirs above,

And own that human souls, like you, can love.

Sir Gib. Heyday! this is downright love in a tragedy! Well; he’s a comical thief.

‘*Fran.* Hush! let him go on, Sir.

‘*Soph.* Can you forgive the tedious banishment,

‘Which my distrust and dread impos’d on you?

‘*Gran.* Can I reproach you for so just, so kind

‘A fear? While through the general race of man,

‘A sensual and infectious passion rages,

‘Giving, from sex to sex, the mortal tainture;

‘Can I complain, if, to preserve yourself

‘From the contagion, you’ve perhaps enjoin’d

‘The healthy to perform his quarantine?

‘But landing thus, upon my native soil,

‘I leave my sufferings past behind, and think

‘The present now is all that’s left of time,

‘Or worth my care.

‘*Soph.* Blush! blush! ye base degenerate world,

‘That boast the bliss of gross connubial love:

‘Can you wear human forms, yet see the prone,

‘The brute creation equal your desires?

‘Had you or souls or sense refin’d, you’d form

‘Your wishes worthy your superior being;

‘Curb, with imperial reason, lawless nature,

‘And reach, like us, the joys of love seraphic.’

Gran. Oh, harmony of heart! Oh, spotless passion!

Here, on this hand, the altar of my vows,
 I offer up my purer part, my soul
 To thine, and swear inviolable——

Soph. ————— Hold !

Passions, like ours, no formal vows require ;
 For vows suppose distrust, or faithless love,
 The frail security of sensual flames ;
 But where the pure, with the pure soul unites,
 The simple hand, thus given, and receiv'd, suffices.

Gran. Let then this hand my spotless heart resign.

Soph. Thus in exchange I blend my soul with thine.

Sir Gilb. So ; they are got to hand and heart already ;
 but now, now for a touch at the rest of her premises.

Fran. Nay, dear Sir, be easy.

Sir Gilb. Well ! well ! I will.

Soph. And now, no more Sophronia, but thy friend ;
 Be both my name and sex from hence forgotten.

Gran. No :

Let me remember still that thou art fair ;
 For were there no temptation in thy beauty,
 Where were the merit of such hard resistance ?
 Indeed, my friend, 'tis hard ! 'tis hard resistance !
 ' The organs of my sight, my ear, my feeling,
 ' As I am made of human mold, in spite
 ' Of me, exert their functions, and are pleas'd :'
 I view thee with delight, I hear with transport,
 And thy touch——is rapture——

' *Soph.* How fares my friend ?

' *Gran.* Like the poor wretch that parches in a fever,
 ' With fatal thirst, yet begs for present ease
 ' To drink, and die——

' *Soph.* From whence this new disorder ?

' *Gran.* Tell me, Sophronia, is my virtue blameful,
 ' Because my senses act as nature bids them ?
 ' Am I in fault, if the sharp winter's frost
 ' Can chill my limbs, or summer's sun will scorn them ?
 ' What matter can resist the elements ?
 ' Rivers will freeze, and solid mountains burn ;
 ' What bodies will not change ?——Thus the tall oak——
 ' Though from our meaner flames secure,
 ' Must that, which falls from heaven, endure.
 ' *Soph.* Where has he learned this art of unoffending
 ' flattery ?

[*Aside.*

' *Gran.*

Grang. Canst thou reproach me then, if while thy beauties

- ‘ With such a blaze of charms invade my sense,
- ‘ My human heart’s not proof against their pow’r ?
- ‘ *Soph.* Reproach thee ! No ; bodies are but the shells,
- ‘ Or huts, that cover in the soul, and are,
- ‘ Like other fabrics, subject to mischance :
- ‘ The cells of hermits may be fir’d ; but none
- ‘ Reproach the wretch that suffers by the flame.’

Gran. Oh, Sophronia ! canst thou forgive me then,
That my material dross thus burns before thee ?
That my whole frame thus kindles at thy beauty ?
And even warms my soul with fond desire ?

- ‘ Like an impatient child it languishes,
- ‘ And pines for wants unknown, it sighs, it pants,
- ‘ To be indulg’d upon thy friendly bosom,
- ‘ To fold thee in my tender arms, to talk,
- ‘ And gaze, with mutual soft benevolence
- ‘ Of eyes, as giving were our only pleasure.’

Sir Gilb. Adod ! I believe he’s in earnest, he makes me half in love to hear him.

Soph. Is it possible ? Can then
Such softness mingle with corporeal passion ? *[Apart.]*

Gran. But while the soul alone is suffered to
Possess, and bars my mortal part from joy ;
My poor repining senses murmur at
Their fate, and call thy purity unjust,
‘ To starve the body, while the mind knows plenty,
‘ Yet, like a churl, ingrosses whole the feast.
‘ My senses claim a share from nature’s law ;
‘ They think, with a more melting softness, they
‘ Could love, and e’en inform the soul with rapture.’

Sir Gilb. Ay ; now we begin to work her.

‘ *Gran.* Consider then, as part of me, thy friend,
‘ Thy friend may sure be trusted with your pity !
‘ Oh, relieve them ! give me some sign at least,
‘ One kind embrace, or a chaste sister’s kiss,
‘ In certain proof that thou art still my friend,
‘ That yet thou hat’st me not—I ask no more.

‘ *Soph.* *Pignora certa petis? do pignora certa—Timendo.*

Gran. ‘ Does then thy fear alone refuse me ?’ Oh,
Sophronia !

Why, why must virtue be this foe to nature?
 Why set our senses with our souls at variance,
 As Heav'n had form'd thee fair—to kill thy friend.

Soph. What means my throbbing heart? Oh, virtue!
 Now save me from unequal nature's power! [now,
 Now guard me from myself—and hide my shame!

Gran. Must I then perish? Will my friend forsake me?

Soph. Oh, Granger! I am lost!—thou hast undone
 I am fallen, and thou wilt hate me now. [me!

Gran. Oh, Sophronia!

Soph. — Lend me thy arm, support me!
 Thy melting plaints have stole upon my heart,
 And soften me to wishes never known before.

Gran. Oh, the tumultuous joy! [*She sinks into his arms.*

Sir Gib. Ah, dead! dead! We have her, boy! we
 have her.

Gran. See how she pants!

• How, like a wounded dove, she beats her wings,
 • And trembling hovers to her mate for succour.
 • Oh, the dear confusion! Awake, Sophronia!
 • Now wake to new and unconceiv'd delights,
 • Which faint philosophy could never reach,
 • Which nature gave thee charms to taste and give.

• *Soph.* Oh, I cou'd wish, methinks, for ev'ry power,
 • That might have charms for thee: thy words,
 • Like Hybla drops, distil upon my sense,
 • And I could hear thee talk for ever.'

Gran. 'Oh, be but thus forever kind, thy eyes
 • Will find new subjects for eternal talk,
 • And everlasting love:' blush not, my fair,
 That thou art kind; thy heart has only paid
 To love, the tribute due from nature's whole creation:
 • For wisdom to his power oppos'd, is folly.'

Hear how the British Virgil sings his sway;
 "Thus every creature, and of every kind,
 The secret joys of mutual passion find;
 Not only man's imperial race, but they
 That wing the liquid air, or swim the sea,
 Or haunt the desert, rush into the flame;
 For love is lord of all, and is in all the same."

[*Exeunt Gran. and Soph.*
Sir

Sir Gilb. Oh, rare philosophy ! Oh, fine philosophy ! dainty philosophy ! ho ! [Singing.]

Fran. Ha, ha, ha ! that must be a pleasant sort of philosophy indeed, Sir, that pretends to be wiser than nature. Platonic love is a mere philosopher's stone ; when different sexes once come to lay their heads together about it, the projection's sure to fly *in fumo*.

Sir Gilb. Fumo ! Ay, I warrant you. A handsome wench, that shuts herself up two or three hours with a young fellow, only out of friendship, is making a hopeful experiment in natural philosophy indeed — Why it's just like spreading a bag of gunpowder before a great fire, only to dry it ; ha, ha, ha !

Fran. Right, Sir — It puts me in mind of the Irish soldier, who, to steal powder out of a full barrel, cunningly bored a hole in it with a red hot poker.

Sir Gilb. Ah, very good ! ha, ha, ha ! As you say, it's hard luck indeed, that her first touch of his hand should blow up all the rest of her body.

Fran. But to do her justice, Sir, she was not won without a good deal of art neither : a plain battery of love would have done nothing upon her ; you see, he was forced to sap her with his self reproaches, and put it all upon the point of her compassion to his senses.

Sir Gilb. Nay, the toad did worm her nicely, that I must needs say.

Fran. Ha, ha, ha ! what a rare welcome too this news will have with my Lady ! How she will fume at the disappointment !

Sir Gilb. Nay, I have nothing to do with that, you know ; this was none of my doing : let every tub stand upon its own bottom ; ' I shall e'en leave her Ladyship to his management : all I can promise him is, not to hinder the matter.

Fran. That's all he will desire, I dare say, Sir : be you but as a passive in his affair as mine, I'll warrant we will find courage enough between us to maintain our pretensions.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Sir, here's Mr. Delay, the lawyer.

Sir Gilb. Odso ! that's well ! Now, Mr. Frankly —

Fran. I believe, Sir, you had best keep him out of my Lady's sight, till matters are ripe for execution.

Sir Gilb. You are right, you are right; say no more, I'll do it. *Ab, the sly rogue! how he tickled her up!*

Fran. But *harkee, harkee, Sir Gilbert—don't flinch now; don't be a craven; be sure to stand it out stoutly with my Lady.*

Sir Gilb. Will you and Granger continue to stand by me?

Fran. To the last drop of our amorous blood to your daughters, and our amiable blood to you.

Sir Gilb. Why then, if I don't squabble it out with her Ladyship to the last drop of a husband's authority, may I live and die the cock of the hen-peck'd corporation.

[Exit.

Fran. So; thus far we stand fair: we have nothing now to combat but my Lady; and Granger's success with Sophronia, at this time, will naturally strengthen our alliance against her. As for my friend Witling, his own assurance and vanity will partly do his business: 'but, however, in the mean while, it will not be amiss to 'keep him warm and ripe for our design'—à-propos! here he comes.

Enter Witling.

Wit. Ha, ha, ha! dear Tom! I am glad I have found thee, faith! I have a favour to beg of thee.

Fran. Why then, I am glad you have found me too—because, I believe, I shall not grant it.

Wit. Ha, ha! what crabbed still, my dear! But I come to thee from a fair lady, child; and 'tis for her sake I am going to be obliged to thee.

Fran. I am glad of that too. A woman of sense, I warrant her, by her sending thee on a fool's errand.

Wit. Ay, but my dear! the errand happens to be her's now; and so thou hast civilly put the fool upon the woman of sense. Good again! one of thy old blunders, Tom! for, I think thou hast but curied luck in making thy way to the women.

Fran. When you tell me the lady you come from, I shall be better able to guess, whether she takes me or you for a fool.

Wit. Suppose then it were from a lady, Tom, that designs

signs to take either you or me for a husband? What dost thou think of my little Charlotte, my dear Tommy?

Fran. Why, if she takes thee for a husband, I shall think her a fool; and if I should take thee for a wit, she would think me a fool: but by her sending thee to ask a favour of me, it's a sign she thinks thee a fool.

Wit. Ha, ha! a very pretty parcel of cross purposes; a fool and wit, and wit and fool; and she, and thee, and me! What! art thou playing at hustle-cap with thy words, child? 'Thou dost not expect I should take all thy jingle jumble for wit, dost thou?'

'*Fran.* No, faith! if it be wit, I expect thou shouldst not take it.'

'*Wit.* With all my heart—Come, come, it shall be wit then; I will mistake it for once.'—But to business—the fair lady, my dear Tom—

Fran. Ay, what of her?

'*Wit.* Why, poor soul, she desir'd me to come to you, and——'

'*Fran.* And leave her to better company, ha!'

'*Wit.* Look you, Tom, I know losers ought to have leave to speak, and therefore, at present, you shall have all the wit to yourself, my dear: but don't be uneasy at my happiness, dear Tom; for to tell you the truth, the creature is so cursed fond of me, that she begins to grow troublesome already. Ha, ha, ha!'

'*Fran.* Why don't you make yourself easy then, and give her up to me?'

'*Wit.* No no; I must not break the poor fool's heart neither:' for you must know, she is in a terrible taking about me.

Fran. How so, Sir?

Wit. Why she said, just now, she was afraid to marry me so soon as to-night upon thy account.

Fran. Good! then there may be hopes she will not marry thee upon any account.

Wit. No, don't flatter thyself neither, my dear Tommy; for her concern at the bottom was all upon my account.

Fran. How does that appear?

Wit. Why you know, says she, after all, poor Frankly has some sort of pretensions to me: I don't know how it

was

was, says she; but some way or other he got in with my father: so I durst not wholly discourage his addresses. Now, Frankly's of a surly temper, 'says she? and, 'if I should marry you, in the heat of his disappointment, he may say or do some rash thing upon't:' and I know, says she, Mr. Witling, you are violent in your nature too; and if matters should rise to a quarrel, nobody knows where the mischief may end; the world will certainly lay it all at my door—I should be the miserablest creature alive—therefore I beg you, says she, go to him from me, and try to make an amicable end of the business; and the moment poor Frankly's made easy, says she, I'll marry you the next hour, without any reserve in the whole world.

Fran. Why then, without any reserve in the whole world, pray tell the lady, that she may depend upon it I am certainly easy—because I am sure she imposes upon you.

Wit. Impose upon me, child! ha, ha! that's pleasant enough, ha, ha!

Fran. That is, she let's you impose upon yourself, which is the same thing.

Wit. That may be, Tom; but the devil take me if I can find it out: 'but, however, I am mighty glad you do, because then I am sure, as long as you are easy, 'you can't take it ill, if I should burst my ribs with 'laughing at your fancy.

'*Fran.* Oh, not in the least! and to increase your 'mirth, Sir, I will be farther bold to tell you, she has as 'heartily a contempt for you, if possible, as I have.

'*Wit.* Good again! Ha, ha, ha!

'*Fran.* Thou art a thing so below all human consideration, thou hast not wherewithal to give a Spaniard 'jealousy.

'*Wit.* Ah, poor Tom, if thou didst but know all now! 'Ha, ha!

'*Fran.* But to think thyself agreeable to her, thou must 'have the impudence of a French Harlequin.

'*Wit.* Ah, dear Tom, thou charmest me! for since I 'find thou art not, in the least, uneasy at her engagement with me, to tell thee the truth. I have nothing 'else at present that can possibly retard my happiness.

'*Fran.*

Fran. Why then, Sir, be as happy as you deserve ;
 and pray let the lady know, as to any favour she designs
 you, I am in perfect peace of mind and tranquility.

Wit. And you really give me leave to tell her so ?

Fran. Tell her, I am more easy than she herself will
 be, when she has married you.

Wit. Why then' perish me, if thou art not one of the
 best-bred rivals in the whole world ! ha, ha, ha ! and
 here she comes, faith, to thank thee for her part of the
 consolation. Ha, ha !

Fran. Ha, ha !

Enter Charlotte.

Char. So, gentlemen, I am glad to find you in such
 good humour.

Wit. O ! Madam, the dearest friends in the world :
 I have obey'd your commands, and here's honest Tom is
 so far from being uneasy at our marriage, that 'egad I
 can't get him to believe it will ever come to any thing.

Char. O ! as to that, Mr. Frankly may think as he
 pleases ; but if he is not uneasy upon your account, that's
 all I pretend to desire of him.

Wit. No, no, honest Tom will give us no trouble, de-
 pend upon it.

Fran. Not I, upon my honour, Madam, ' for though
 I might be provoked to cut another man's throat, that
 should pretend to you, yet the value I have for Mr.
 Witling, secures him from my least resentment.

Wit. Look you there, Madam ! you see your fears
 are all over ; I don't find we have any thing to do now,
 but to send for the parson.

Char. Ay, but I don't well understand him ; for he
 seems to be neither jealous of your merit, nor my in-
 clination : and that I can scarce think possible.

Fran. You may, upon my soul, Madam : for I have
 so just a sense of both, that if it had not been in re-
 gard to your father's contract, I am convinced you
 would never have endured the sight of him.

Wit. Ah ! poor Tom ! he has much ado to smother
 it.

[*Apart.*

Char. Very pretty ! so you think that my admitting
 his addressee is mere grimace, and that I am all this
 while taking pains only to deceive Mr. Witling.

Fran. Alas ! you need not do that, Madam ; he takes so
 much

' much to deceive himself, he really gives you no trouble about it.

' *Wit.* You see, child, we may put any thing upon him.

' *Char.* Right! you take it as I could wish! Let me alone with him. And so, Sir, you really expect I should be pleased with your having this free opinion of my conduct?'

Fran. I must be pleased with every thing you undertake in my favour, Madam.

Wit. How vain the rogue is too! [*Afide.*

Char. I am amaz'd! but how naturally a coxcomb shews himself. [*Afide.*

Wit. Ay, that's when he is in your hands, Madam; Ha, ha! 'Egad she plays him nicely off. [*Afide.*

' *Char.* After this, one should wonder at nothing! Nay, there are some fools, I see, whose vanity is so far from being offensive, that they become diverting even to a rival.

' *Fran.* Mr. Witling is always entertaining, Madam.

' *Wit.* Hah, prodigious! 'Egad he thinks you mean me all this while. Ha, ha, ha! [*Apart.*

' *Char.* Well, sure there never was so bright a coxcomb! [*Apart.*

' *Wit.* 'Egad I'll humour him: Ha, ha? [*Apart.*

Char. By all means, you will make him shine to a miracle. [*Apart.*

Wit. Why then, perish me Tom, if ever I was so well diverted at a French comedy. [*Shakes his hand.*

Fran. That may very well be, Sir; for fools are apt to be fond of their own parts. [*Shakes Witling's hand.*

Char. Ha, ha!

Wit. Ay! so they are, the devil take me; for, I see, there's no beating thee out of thine.

Fran. How should I be out, when you play all the scene yourself!

Wit. No, no, Tom, I only laugh all; but 'tis your part that makes me, child.

Fran. Right! If you did not laugh, where the devil should the jest be?

Wit. Why, then, you see, I do the fool justice, Tom, Ha, ha!

Fran.

Fran. Ay, the devil take me, dost thou; I never saw him better acted.

Wit. Ah! but you don't know, my dear, that to make a coxcomb shine, requires a little more wit than thou art aware of.

Fran. I know that he who has least wit of us two, has enough to do that, my dear.

Wit. Ay, that is when a coxcomb shows himself, Tom.

Fran. Nay, in that I grant no mortal can come up to thee.

Wit. Ha, ha, ha! Oh, dear rogue, I must kiss thee.

Omnes. Ha, ha, ha!

Enter Lady Wrangle.

L. Wrang. Your servant, your servant, good people: whence all this mighty mirth, pray?

Wit. O, Madam, here has been such a scene! such hit and dash upon one another; in short, such brightness o'both sides, the full moon, in a frosty night, never came up to it.

Char. I must needs say, I never saw Mr. Witling shine so before.

Fran. No, Madam? Why, he always talks like a lunatic, as you now may judge by his similies.

Wit. Ah, poor Tom! thy wit indeed is, like the light of the moon, none of thy own: if I don't mistake, my dear, I was forced to shine upon thee, before thou wert able to make one reflection.

Fran. There you are once in the right: for I certainly could not have laughed, if you had not given me a hearty occasion.

Wit. Ay, but the cream of the jest is, Tom, that at the same time I really gave thee no occasion at all.

Fran. Right again, my dear: for your not knowing that, is the only jest that's worth laughing at.

Both. Ha, ha, ha!

L. Wrang. This must be some extraordinary mistake indeed; for I have no notion that Mr. Frankly and you can have reason to laugh upon the same occasion.

Wit. Why, faith! the occasion is a little extraordi-

H

nary;

nary ; for you must know, Madam, that honest Tom and I here, are both going to be married to this lady.

L. Wrang. Both !

Wit. Ay both, Madam ; for, it seems, she has not been able to convince us, that either of us must go without her.

L. Wrang. That's so like Mr. Frankly's vanity, that cannot think his mistress lost, though he sees her just falling into the arms of his rival.

Fran. My vanity and yours, Madam, are much upon a foot ; tho' I think you happened to be first cured of it.

L. Wrang. What do you mean, Sir ?

Fran. That by this time you are convinced I was never in love with your ladyship.

L. Wrang. I am convinced, that a very little trouble would have made you so.

Fran. It must have been a good deal more than it cost me, to make you believe so.

L. Wrang. If you have still hopes of marrying Charlotte, Sir, I don't wonder at your believing any thing. Ha, ha, ha !

Fran. Laugh when you see me despair, Madam.

L. Wrang. I need not stay for that ; your hope, is ridiculous enough, and I laugh because you can't see.

Fran. ' Yes, yes, I can see,' Madam : I have seen all this day what 'tis you drive at : in short, Madam, you have no mind that either of Sir Gilbert's daughters should marry ; because if they die maids, you have secured the chance of succeeding to their fortunes.

L. Wrang. Ay, do make the world believe that, if you can : persuade Mr. Witling that I have no mind Charlotte should marry him.

Fran. What Mr. Witling thinks, is out of the question, Madam ; but you are sure that she never designs to marry him : so that your setting up his pretensions is not with the least view of doing him good, but of doing me harm ; or rather, that while you manage the dispute well on both sides, neither of us may have her.

L. Wrang. He has guess'd the secret ; but that shall not hinder my proceeding. [*Aside.*] You are in the right to hope as long as you can, Sir ; but I presume you
' don't

‘ don’t do it from my friendship, nor Mr. Wrangle’s consent, or Charlotte’s inclination.

‘ *Fran.* Be what it will, Madam, it has a better foundation, than your hope of succeeding either to her’s or ‘ Sophronia’s fortune: for,’ shall I tell you another secret, Madam? Sophronia is going to be married to Granger; so that you are equally like to be disappointed there too.

L. Wrang. Sophronia married!

Fran. Ay, ay, married, married, Madam: wedded, bedded, made a mere wife of: ’tis not half an hour ago since I saw her sink, and melt into his bosom, with all the yielding fondness of a milk-maid..

L. Wrang. Sophronia, do this?

Fran. Sophronia, Madam; nay, Sir Gilbert was, at the same time, a secret witness of all; and was glad, glad of it, Madam: ‘and to my certain knowledge, resolves, ‘ that Granger shall marry her instantly:’ and so, Madam, all that fantastic fort philosophy, that you have been building in her brains for seven years together, is (with one honest attack of mere flesh and blood) fairly demolished, and brought to nothing.

L. Wrang. I’ll not believe it; I know your ears deceiv’d you; he might perhaps transport her, but never to a sensual thought.

‘ *Fran.* Oons! Madam, I tell you, I heard and saw it all; myself, saw her sighing, blushing, panting in his arms, with mortal, sensual, amorous desire: all her ‘ romantic pride reduced, and humbled to the obedience ‘ of that universal monarch of mankind, Love, Madam; ‘ plain, naked, natural Love, Love, Madam.

‘ *L. Wrang.* I am confounded! If this be true, his triumph is insupportable. [*Aside.*] Ha! what do I see!”

Enter Granger, leading Sophronia.

‘ *Fran.* Dear Granger, I congratulate thy happiness!

‘ *Gran.* My happiness indeed! for till I was victorious, ‘ I knew not half the value of my conquest.

‘ *Fran.* [*To Sophronia.*] Give me then leave to hope, ‘ Madam, that our former difference is forgot; since the ‘ more elevated passion of my friend has now convinced ‘ me of my own unworthiness.

Soph. I cannot disavow my tenderest sense of Granger's merit, give it what name you please; I own 'tis something—*Quod nequeo dicere, & sentio tantum*: but am proud that love alone, unassisted by philosophy, could never have subdued me.

L. Wrang. Is it possible!

By your leave, Madam.

[*She breaks through the company, and takes Soph. apart.*]

Fran. Heyday! what's to do now?

Gran. O Frankly! I have such a melting scene to tell thee!

Fran. You may spare yourself the trouble, Sir Gilbert and I over-heard every word of it. } [*Aside.*
But I allow you an artist.

Gran. Was it not very whimsical?

Fran. Hush!

L. Wrang. [*To Soph.*] Look in my face—full upon me.

Soph. Why that severe look, Madam?

L. Wrang. To make you blush at your apostasy.

Soph. Converts to truth are no apostates, Madam.

L. Wrang. Is this your self-denial! This your distaste of odious man?

Soph. Madam, I have consider'd well my female state, and am now a proselyte to that philosophy, which says, Nature makes nought in vain.

L. Wrang. What's then become of your Platonic system?

Soph. Dissolved, evaporated, impracticable, and fallacious all: you'll own I have labour'd in the experiment, but found at last, that to try gold in a crucible of virgin wax, was a mere female folly.

L. Wrang. But how durst you, Madam, entertain a thought of marriage without acquainting me?

Soph. Madam, I am now under this gentleman's protection; and from henceforth, think my actions only cognizable to him.

L. Wrang. Very fine!

Fran. Ay, ay, Madam, 'tis but fretting your spleen to no purpose; you have no right to dispose of either of those ladies: Sir Gilbert's consent is what we depend upon: and as far as that can go, we shall make bold to insist

insist upon them both, Madam : and so you may as well put your passion in your pocket, Madam.

L. Wrang. Insupportable ! *[Walks in anger.]*

Wit. Ha, ha ! well said, Tommy ! What, art thou crack-brained still, my dear ? How the devil didst thou come by Sir Gill's consent ? What, he has not mortgag'd it twice over, has he ? But if he has, with all my heart ; I fancy we shall find a way to make his first deed stand good, however ; and that, I am sure, I have here safe in my pocket, child.

Fran. Oh, that shall be tried presently, Sir ; and here he comes with the lawyer, for the purpose.

Enter Sir Gilbert, with a Lawyer.

L. Wrang. Mr. Wrangle, what do you mean by this usage ? How dare you affront me thus ?

Sir Gilb. I affront you, my Lady !

L. Wrang. Ay, Sir, by bringing these roysters here, to insult me in my own family.

Sir Gilb. Frankly—stand by me.

Gran. Roysters, Madam !

L. Wrang. Sir, I am not speaking to you. I say, Mr. Wrangle, how dare you do this ?

Sir Gilb. Do, Madam ! I don't do any thing, not I. If the gentlemen have done any harm, you had best talk to them ; I believe they have both tongues in their heads, and will be able to answer you.

Fran. Ay, ay, Madam, if you have received any injury from either of us, we are the proper persons to talk with you.

L. Wrang. What, will you stand by, and tamely see me abused in my own house ?

Sir Gilb. Odzines, Madam, don't abuse yourself ! the gentlemen are civil gentlemen, and men of honour ; but if you don't know how to behave yourself to them, that's none of their fault.

L. Wrang. Prodigious ! behave myself ! Do you presume to teach me, you rude, illiterate monster ?

Sir Gilb. Hold her fast, pray, gentlemen.

Gran. *[Interposing.]* Come, come, be composed, Madam. Consider how these violent emotions dishonour your philosophy.

Sir Gilb. Ay, Madam, if you are a philosopher, now, let's see a sample of it.

L. Wrang. Yes, Sir, I'll give you one instance of it immediately; before you stir out of this room, I'll make you do justice to this gentleman; I'll make you keep your contract, Sir.

Sir Gilb. Why, Madam, you need not be in a passion about that; I don't design any other; I'll do him justice immediately.

L. Wrang. Oh, will you so? Come, then, where's the deed, Sir?

Wit. A-hum! Your humble servant! How dost thou do now, my little Tommy?

Fran. I'll tell you presently, Sir.

Wit. Ha, ha! 'Egad, thou art resolved to die hard, I find.

Law. Here, Madam, this is the deed; there is nothing wanting but the blanks to be filled up with the bridegroom's name. Pray, which is the gentleman?

L. Wrang. Here, Sir, this is he——Put in William Witling, esq.

Sir Gilb. Hold, Madam, two words to that bargain? that is not the gentleman I have resolved upon.

L. Wrang. Come, come, Mr. Wrangle, don't be a fool, I say.

Sir Gilb. And, pray, Madam, don't you pretend to be wiser than I am.

L. Wrang. What stupid fetch have you got in your head now?

Wit. Heyday! what time of the moon is this? Why, have not I your contract here in my hand, Sir Gilbert?

Sir Gilb. With all my heart; make your best on't; I'll pay the penalty; and what have you to say now? And so, Sir, [*To the Lawyer.*] I say, put me in Thomas Frankly, esq.

L. Wrang. Mr. Wrangle, don't provoke me. Do you know that the penalty of your refusing Mr. Witling, is above six-and-twenty thousand pounds difference, Sir?

Sir Gilb. Yes, Madam; but to let you see that I am not the fool you take me for, neither; there's that will secure me against paying a farthing of it.

[*Sir Gilbert shows a bond.*

L. Wrang.

L. Wrang. What do you mean?

Sir Gilb. Why, that this, Madam, is a joint bond from Mr. Granger and Frankly, to indemnify me from all demands, costs, and consequences of Mr. Witling's contract.

[*Lady Wrangle peruses the bond.*]

Char. Now, Mr. Witling, you see upon what a shallow foundation Frankly built all his vanity and assurance. But, poor man! he did not consider it was still in my power to marry you, tho' you had no contract at all with my father.

Wit. Right, my pretty soul—I suppose he thought the merit and frank air of this bond, forsooth, would have made you cock sure to him; but I'll let him see, presently, that I know how to pay a handsome compliment to a fair lady, as well as himself. 'Egad, I will bite his head off.

Char. Ay, do, Mr. Witling; you touch my heart with the very thought of it.

Wit. Ah, you charming devil!

L. Wrang. [*To Sir Gilbert.*] Is this, then, your expedient? Is this your sordid way of evading all right and justice? Go, your vile scandal to the board you sit at! But you shall find that I have a superior sense of honour: and thus, thus, thus, I'll force you to be just.

[*Tears the bond.*]

Fran. Confusion!

Sir Gilb. Oons, Madam! what do you mean by this outrage?

L. Wrang. Now, where's your security? Where is your vile evasion now, Sir? What trick, what shift have you now to save you?

Sir Gilb. Frankly——stand by me.

'*Fran.* Was ever such a devil?'

Gran. Fear nothing; I'll warrant you; come, Sir, don't be disheartened; your security shall be renewed to your content. Let the lawyer draw it up this instant, and I'll give my word and honour to sign it again before all this company.

Sir Gilb. Say'st thou so, my lad? Why, then, odsheartlikins——Frankly, stand by me.

Fran. Generous Granger!

L. Wrang. Let the lawyer draw up any such thing in my house, if he dares.

Gran.

Gran. Nay, then, Madam, I'll see who dares molest him.

Fran. 'Egad, whoever does, shall have more than one to deal with.

Sir Gilb. Well said; stand your ground—Write away, man. [To the Lawyer.]

Char. Now, Mr. Witling——

Wit. Nay, nay, if that's your play, gentlemen—Come, come, I'll shew you a shorter way to make an end of this matter——and to let you see you are all in the wrong box, and that now I am secure of the lady's inclination, I think it a dishonour to her beauty to make use of any other advantage, than the naked merit of her humble servant. There, Sir Gilbert, there's your contract back again; tear it, cancel it, or light your pipe with it—And Madam—— [To Char.]

Char. Ay, now, Mr. Witling, you have made me the happiest creature living. And now, Mr. Lawyer——

Wit. Ay, now, gentlemen——

Char. Put in Thomas Frankly, esq.

Wit. Fire and brimstone!

Fran. Ay, now Mr. Witling——

Sir Gilb. Odsheart, in with him——

L. Wrang. Come, come, Mr. Wrangle——

Sir Gilb. Oons, wife, be quiet!

L. Wrang. Wife! What, am I abused, insulted, then?

Sir Gilb. Ah, Charlotte, let me hug thee, and buss thee; and blest thee to death! But, here, hussy, here's a pair of lips that will make better work with thee.

Wit. Bit, by the powers!

Char. Nay, don't say that of me, Mr. Witling; 'twas even all your own doing: for you can't reproach me with having once told you I ever loved, or liked you. How then could you think of marrying me?

Wit. Not reproach you, Madam? Oons, and death! did you not as good as——

Fran. Hold, Sir; when you speak to my wife, I must beg you to soften the tone of your voice a little.

Wit. Heyday! what a pox, must not losers have leave to speak, neither?

Fran. No, no, my dear Billy, thou art no loser at all; for

for you have made your call, you see, and now have fairly had your refusal too.

Wit. Ha, ha! that's pleasantly said, however, 'egad! I can't help laughing at a good thing, though, tho' I am half ready to hang myself.

Fran. Nay, then, Witling, henceforth I'll allow thee a man of parts; 'tho', at the same time, you must grant 'me, there are no fools like your wits.' But since thou hast wit enough to laugh at thyself, I think nobody else ought to do it.

Wit. Why, then, dear Tom, I give you joy; for, to say the truth, I believe I was a little over-hasty in this matter. But, as thou sayest, he that has not wit enough to find himself sometimes a fool, is in danger of being fool enough to have nobody think him a wit but himself.'

Fran. [*To L. Wrang.*] And now, Madam, were it but possible to deserve your pardon——

L. Wrang. I see you know my weakness——Submission must prevail upon a generous nature—I forgive you.

Sir Gilb. Why, that's well said of all sides. And, now you are part of my family, gentlemen, I'll tell you a secret that concerns your fortunes——Hark you—in one word——sell——sell out as fast as you can; for (among friends) the game's up——ask no questions——but, I tell you, the jest is over——But money down, (d'ye observe me?) money down. Don't meddle for time; for the time's a coming, when those that buy will not be able to pay. And so, the devil take the hindmost; and Heaven bless you all together.

Gran. And now, Sophronia, set we forward to the promised land of love.

Soph. In vain, against the force of nature's law,
Would rigid morals keep our hearts in awe;
All our lost labours of the brain but prove,
In life there's no philosophy like love.

END of the FIFTH ACT.

E P I L O G U E.

THE time is come the Roman bard foretold,
A brazen year succeeds an age of gold;

An age ———

When specious books were open'd for undoing,
And English hands, in crouds, subscrib'd their ruin.

Some months ago, whoever could suppose,
A goosequill race of rulers should have rose,
T'have made the warlike Britons groan beneath their blows? }
Evils, that never yet beheld the sun, }

To foreign-arms, or civil jars, unknown,
These trembling miscreants, by their wiles have done.
Thus the fierce lion, whom no force could foil,
By village-curs is baited in the toil.

Forgive the muse then, if her scenes were laid
Before your fair possessions were betray'd;

She took the flitting form as fame then ran,
While a director seem'd an honest man:

But were she from his present form to take him,
What a huge gorging monster must she make him?
How would his paunch with golden ruin swell?
Whole families devouring at a meal?

What motley humour in a scene might flow,
Were we these upstarts in their arts to show?
When their high betters at their gates have waited,
And all to beg the favour to be cheated;

Even that favour, (or they're by fame bely'd)
To raise the value of the cheat, deny'd.

And while Sir John was airing on his prancers,
He's left his cookmaid to give peers their answers.

Then clerks in Berlins, purchas'd by their cheats,
That splash their walking betters in the streets.

And while, by fraud, their native country's sold,
Cry, Drive, you dog, and give your horses gold:

Even Jews no bounds of luxury refrain,
But boil their Christian hams in pure Champain.

Till then, the guilty, that have caus'd these times,
Feel a superior censure for their crimes,
Let all, whose wrongs the face of mirth can bear,
Enjoy the muse's vengeance on them here.



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